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## RECOMMENDATIONS.

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FROM THE REV. JAMES BLYTHE, D. D.

*Cincinnati, Nov. 23d. 1831.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

As you know I had the pleasure, some time ago, of looking into a manuscript work of yours on the subject of slavery, it has given me great pleasure to learn that you have thoughts of publishing those letters. A more acceptable present could not be made to the public, in my opinion, particularly at the present time.

As far as I have had it in my power to judge, I do not hesitate to say, that I am better pleased with your work on this subject, than with anything I have seen. I have only to add, that I hope an enlightened public will not only suitably appreciate your disinterested effort in the cause of suffering humanity, in the liberation of so many of your own slaves; but also receive with a generous patronage, this enlightened and well conducted effort of your pen.

With sentiments of great esteem, I am, Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

JAMES BLYTHE.

REV. J. D. PAXTON.

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FROM JOHN GREEN, ESQ.

*Lincoln, Nov. 18th, 1831.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I hope you will not fail to make arrangements for the publication of your letters on slavery. In my judgment,

\*

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

they are, taken as a whole, the best essays I have read on the subject. I believe they are well suited to the present time—would be read with interest—particularly by Christians, and may be the means of doing much good. On reading the manuscript last year, I thought, and perhaps suggested, that some slight alterations might be made with advantage. The occasion which gave rise to the writing of the letters had passed away, and a particular reference to it did not seem necessary. On reflection, however, it strikes me that the narrative you have given, will serve as an introduction by no means inappropriate—and may have the good effect of warning other congregations to be more circumspect and charitable towards those who press upon them the performance of disagreeable duties.

With high regard,

Your Friend and Brother,

JOHN GREEN.

REV. JOHN D. PAXTON.

# LETTERS ON SLAVERY;

ADDRESSED TO

THE CUMBERLAND CONGREGATION,

VIRGINIA.

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BY J. D. PAXTON,

THEIR FORMER PASTOR.

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*LEXINGTON, KY.:*

PUBLISHED BY ABRAHAM T. SKILLMAN,

BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER.

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1833.

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## PREFACE.

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THE writer of the following letters was, in 1826, so unfortunate as to give some offence, on the subject of Slavery, to a part of the Cumberland Congregation, (Va.) of which he was then Pastor. The whole facts of the case appeared to him to justify, if not require, that he should give a statement of them to the public. With this view the following letters were written soon after that event occurred. He yielded, however, to the opinion of some friends, that on account of existing excitement, some little time should be allowed to pass before they were given to the public.

His object in these letters is, after a brief statement of the facts above alluded to, to examine more fully than he has seen done the teaching of Scripture respecting Slavery, notice its manifold evils, the dangers with which it threatens the South, and what religion and self-preservation require us to do.

*Danville, Ky. March, 1833.*





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TO  
THE CUMBERLAND CONGREGATION.

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LETTER I.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE circumstances under which we separated have induced me to address to you the following letters. The subject on which they treat, had a connection with our separation. That event led me to examine it more carefully than I had previously done, and there appears a propriety in addressing to you the result of said examination. A part of the matter in letters XI. and XII. and a small portion of it, with but little alteration, belonged to an essay, the third number of which, perhaps rather incautiously written,\* gave some offence—and was the immediate cause of my leaving you.

It will to me be a matter of regret, should you consider these letters as designed to fix a serious charge on you, or raise an odium against you in the public mind. This is not my object. It is due to candour to say, that I have thought, and still think, that I was not kindly treated. Admitting that the piece in the Visitor was incautiously written—that as a friend since suggested, it had “*too much truth* in it—that I gave at once what was enough for half a dozen doses;” still, as it was, by general admission, all truth, it might, I think, in a world so false as this, and at a time when truth is so hard to come at in the public prints, have passed with much less complaint.

I am satisfied that much the greater part of the congregation soon became sensible, that improper means were used by a few, to get up the excitement, and that it greatly exceeded the cause of offence. Of this I had evidence be-

\* See Appendix, A.

fore I left the neighbourhood, and have since had it confirmed from quarters entitled to credit. This state of things would of itself be a sufficient reason with me for cherishing, even if it had been interrupted, all that kindness of feeling and good will towards you, which I ever wish to have towards all people, and especially towards those among whom I have laboured in the Gospel. I experienced, however, during the whole affair, much less interruption of those feelings than many of you may have supposed. I was conscious that my purposes were good—that I had at heart the real interest of the master as well as the slave. Offence, however, was taken. I regretted it, and especially the course which those offended chose to pursue. I viewed it and endeavoured to bear it as one of those trials we are all liable to while labouring to benefit our fellow men.

No good would probably result from dwelling at much length on those unpleasant affairs. It may however serve to correct some misstatements that have gone abroad, as well as explain some things not generally known, and at the same time to answer the charge made against me, of undue zeal and imprudence, to give a short statement of my views and course respecting slavery.

I know not that I could, in the same compass, better express my views of slavery, and the duty of professors of religion respecting it, than is done in the following extract from the minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of 1818, containing its opinion respecting slavery:—"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, having taken into consideration the subject of slavery, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it, to the people under their care. We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature—as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and precepts of the Gospel of Christ, which enjoins 'that all things that ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system. It exhibits rational, accountable and immortal creatures in

such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the Gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice or humanity.

“It is manifestly the duty of all Christians, who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest and unwearied endeavours to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this foul blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible, throughout the world.”

I was a member of the assembly that passed the resolutions of which the above is an extract. They passed unanimously, and were sent down in the printed Minutes for the information of the Churches. This took place several years before you called me to be your pastor. I never concealed my views, nor that I was disposed to act in accordance with them.

I propose in the present letters to prove what is asserted in the above extract—the moral evil of slavery, and the duty of Christians to let no selfish interest prolong the sin and injustice, but in the fear of God to do all they can in consistency with duty, to fit for and restore to freedom, those in bondage.

In accordance with the above views, I was led to pursue a course in several respects, with which I found some of you were not satisfied. It led me to favour the Colonization Society—to take up collections for that object, and to attempt founding an Auxiliary Society among you.

I thought the plan of colonizing in Africa, well calculated to benefit that country, by introducing Christianity and civilization there; to benefit those coloured people who might go out, by placing them in a situation where

they would be free indeed; and especially, that it would benefit our beloved country, by the effect its success would have on the public mind and the whole system of slavery among us. That it would result in removing the whole coloured population from among us, I did not much expect, nor do I yet; but that it would tell, more or less, on the public feeling I did not doubt. I considered it as the result of a progress of public feeling, and as calculated to call forth, still more, that feeling, and give it a safe and profitable direction. Had not the colonizing scheme been projected, some other, perhaps less safe, would. The spirit of the age made this certain. The public feeling long gathering, but pent up, must have poured itself into some channel, that promised to open a passage through which the oppressed might go out free.

These views led me to refer a little to the subject, a few times, in preaching. There were, however, usually, slaves in our worshiping assemblies, and that, together with a wish to avoid giving offence, induced me to touch very seldom on that subject.

By marriage, one or two families of slaves came into my possession. Mrs. P.'s views on the subject of slavery, I found to agree substantially with my own. We both felt it our duty to free said slaves, as soon as it could be done to their apparent advantage. We watched the progress of the colony at Liberia for several years; and in the meantime used means to prepare our slaves for freedom. As soon as we were satisfied that they had better prospects there of doing well for themselves, than they could have with us, we encouraged them to go; gave them such an outfit as our means afforded, and sent them to the colony.

Our reasons for this course may be summed up in few words. We believed slavery morally wrong, and felt in duty bound not to continue it after a way was open to get clear of it; and taking all things into view, we thought their prospects for doing well, permanently, were better at Liberia than in this country, either in the free or the slaveholding States.

Their personal interest, however, although important, was not the only thing I felt bound to regard. What effect would my continuing to be a slaveholder, and rais-

ing my family in those habits, have on the general question of slavery? Actions speak louder than words. My words condemning slavery would have passed unheeded; my conduct would have been pointed to as sanctioning it. Every person of any observation knows that words are considered as cheap things; and when weighed against a man's actions, are light as vanity. Where there is any sense of religion, and with most, there is a little; the practice of professors of religion, and especially of ministers of the gospel, forms with many, a very common standard of right and wrong. Persons who seldom look into the Bible to see what it says about the morality of any kind of conduct, are sure to know how professors of religion act respecting it, and especially what the preacher does. Professors of religion usually allow themselves a little more liberty than their preacher takes, and nonprofessors, allow themselves a good deal more than is taken by either preacher or professor. I once, soon after I entered the ministry, happening to be in a place where some curious feats of horsemanship were exhibited, walked some hundred yards, and paid perhaps a ninepence for the privilege of seeing them. I thought few, if any body there, knew me. In a few hours afterwards, I fell in company with some professors of religion, who let me know that they had seen me at the show: adding that they feared they were doing wrong in going to such a place, until they saw me come in, but felt no scruples afterwards, as they took it for granted, that if it were wrong, I would not have attended. The very fact that my attending removed their doubts, increased mine, as to the propriety of going to such places. I never did and never will attend again; without saying it is assuredly wrong to attend, it is enough for me that such amusements are not things to which I ought to reconcile the consciences of others, by my example.

The continued practice of slavery I considered of more than doubtful character. I considered it positively wrong; and whatever others might do, and persevere in doing, I felt that I owed it to God, to the purity of the gospel, to the cause of truth and equity, and to my own consistency and peace of mind, not by word or example to justify the unnecessary continuance of such hard dealings of man to



man. I had not the vanity to expect that any very great effect would follow from liberating my slaves. I knew that almost all the influence in your part of the country, was, as far as I could judge, on the side of slavery. I knew, however, that all great things have had small beginnings. Elijah's cloud was at first only as "big as a man's hand," but in due time it covered all the heavens, and blest the earth with its rain. And should no good follow from what I did, still what little influence I might have, would be for right and duty, and not against it. I did hope, indeed, that however few might at present follow my example, it would lead some to *think* more seriously on the subject of slavery; and that ultimately the good cause would be promoted by it. And however differently some things have fallen out from what I then anticipated, I still hope that it will finally appear that at least as much good will have resulted as will balance the evil; and more than will result from the course of those, who, while they own the evil of slavery, still give it the sanction of their example.

If liberating those slaves was not, as many have thought, the main offence I gave, it led very directly to my writing the piece in the Visitor, which was the immediate cause of our separation. That persons would be led to think on the subject of slavery as a religious matter, was my hope; but that as much pains would be taken to justify it from Scripture, I did not expect—much less did I expect that so much would be said to place my conduct in the wrong—and represent what I did as unbecoming my character as a preacher, and my relation to the congregation as a pastor.

While hearing so much said in favour of slavery, and the Scriptures so often appealed to as justifying it, it was natural for me to wish to give my views on the subject. When so much was said as went to charge me with weakness in thinking slavery wrong, and with injustice to others in setting my slaves free, I felt that I owed it to myself, to give my reasons for my belief—that I owed it to the cause of freedom to state her claims—and especially that I owed it to the Scriptures to rescue them from those perversions of meaning and application, which made them justify what their whole spirit went most strongly to condemn.



In this state of things I wrote the Essay,\* at the third number of which offence was taken. As to the spirit of that number, I am free to own, as I did from the time my attention was particularly called to it, that I think it not altogether happy; a milder spirit might have been better. To those who have been educated to think slavery not wrong, it may, and probably did, seem harsh; yet to persons who view slavery as I do, and as a large number in our country do, as a thing altogether wrong, the piece appeared probably not faulty on that score. At all events those who have made so free in censuring me, and charge me with weakness and injustice to others in liberating my slaves, might have allowed me to say something in self-defence. It ought to be recollected that it is slavery in the abstract that is there assailed, although a practical aspect is given to the argument by the illustration used to expose its evil. Few among the more intelligent in our community justify slavery in the abstract; there are, however, a good many of the less knowing who do. It was my fortune to meet with some of this sort. In conversations on the subject a great deal was said that went to place the whole wrong of slavery, in the treatment of slaves, to maintain that slavery itself was not wrong, provided the slave was not hardly dealt by while held in that condition. Give them plenty to eat and drink and wear, and make them do a reasonable portion of work, and there is no harm in it, was in substance often said. This was in my opinion not only an error, but one of vital importance, one that went to the core of the subject: and against it, that number of the Essay that gave offence, was chiefly aimed; and while assailing what seemed to be the stronghold of the system, I thought it justifiable to give point and force to my attack; demolish, if I could, its defences, and prove that it was untenable. The timing of the piece was perhaps not the most fortunate; although near six months intervened between freeing said slaves and its publication, during which much had been said about slavery, and in justification of it; it would, there is reason to believe, have been better to have let a few more months pass, before I did any thing

\* Appendix A.

else, which might serve as “an occasion to those who desired an occasion” to find fault.

Considerable offence, however, was taken at the piece, and a good deal done by a few to excite and spread the dissatisfaction. I presently heard of what was going on, and in a short time received information from the Session that offence was taken at said piece, and at myself as the supposed author, with a request to know whether I was the author, and to have a conference with me respecting it. I met them as requested, informed them that I was the author, that those were my sentiments before invited to be your pastor, that I had never concealed my opinions; but that in publishing them in said piece I had no intention of giving offence, nor did I think that any offence need have been taken. That so far as the spirit and manner of the piece was faulty, I regretted it; but that I could not change my opinions nor give up my right of explaining and advocating them, to please any body of men. But while I maintained my right to support my own opinions, I loved peace, and to put an end to the whole matter, I would resign the charge of the congregation, and seek a people who thought as I did; and leave you to obtain a pastor whose opinions might agree with your own.

It remains before closing this letter to make a few remarks on the charge made against me, of undue zeal and imprudence, on the subject of slavery.

Those of you who best know me, and many of you have known me for sixteen or eighteen years, do I am satisfied give me credit for *meaning well* in what I did. You possibly, however, may think that I was over-zealous and imprudent on the subject. Some pains have been taken to send abroad this opinion. Several persons, and some of my brethren in the ministry, have in letters to me, and about me, more than intimated it.

It is possible there may be some truth in it. At least I do not feel clear in saying that there is not. Although it may be more uncommon, yet I know not that there is any thing less reputable in having *too much* zeal in a good cause than in having too little; and I have seen enough of the world to know that very many judge of the prudence or imprudence of persons, chiefly by their success.

The successful pass for prudent, while the unsuccessful pass for imprudent. I never advanced a claim to infallibility, and have no hesitation in admitting that I may have erred. The man who has lived forty years—spent four or five of them as a teacher in a college, with a superintendence of the generous, talented, but mischievous and unruly Virginian youth—fifteen years in the ministry, eleven of them as pastor of congregations, and four as a missionary, all in the slave-holding states, and at last gives offence to *a part* of one congregation by freeing his own slaves, and trying to lead others to aid in measures for improving the condition of that oppressed people; and on that ground only is charged with undue zeal and imprudence,—ought, perhaps, to let it pass, and thank God that he has got along so well. He has, perhaps, come as near to those of whom “all men speak well,” as it is safe to get; for a wo hangs over them, however much our love of human praise may make us wish to be of their number.

It sometimes, however, happens that we cannot blame ourselves for things for which we are blamed by others; while on the other hand, we may feel that we deserve blame where others approve. If it were meant simply to charge me with not in all things pursuing the best course, not using the best means, not timing my words and actions and manner in every instance for the best, it may possibly be true; yea, I doubt not that it is true. There is often a choice of means and times and manner; and until a trial be made, it may be very doubtful which will succeed the best. Many persons are so fearful of not doing things in the best manner, that they wholly omit doing them; although they are things that plainly ought to be done. So fearful are they that they may not so do them as to obtain the approbation of their fellow men, that they prefer offending God by not even trying to do his will as well as they can. “I have not so learned Christ.” In things that plainly ought to be done and done zealously, I would, while trying to do them as well as I can, prefer the charge of over-zeal and imprudence from those who are doing nothing, than to share with them their character for prudence in doing nothing at all.

I am, however, free to admit that with my present information, I should not in every particular pursue the same course. I was passing along a way that had not been much travelled. I was *feeling* it out for myself; and it is not altogether fair, much less generous, for those who stood at a distance, looked coldly on, but gave no warning, to raise the cry of over-zeal and imprudence as soon as they discover a difficulty has been met with; while, perhaps, they themselves were instrumental in placing it before me.

I beg leave to ask those who charge me with over-zeal, &c., whether they are fully satisfied that they themselves are zealous enough? Have they shown as much zeal to better the condition of slaves as the law of love, as the command of God, requires? Are they fully satisfied that their charge of undue zeal does not, in part, arise from a wish to justify themselves in doing nothing? from a conviction that they must either charge me with having too much zeal, or admit that they themselves have too little? Are they sure that in charging me with imprudence in giving some offence, they are not in part influenced by a desire to justify themselves in their prudence in avoiding offence by doing nothing? If I had continued to practice slavery, if I had made excuses, or written apologies for it, or "*talked about it, and about it,*" so that Dr. Syntax himself could not tell whether I talked for it or against it; I should probably not only have given no offence, but retained my character for prudence, with those prudent brethren.

There are some facts which in all fairness ought to be taken into the account by those who set in judgment on my conduct, before they bring in the charge of over-zeal and imprudence.

While I considered it a positive duty not to justify slavery; while I thought it right to let it be known distinctly that I considered it wrong, morally wrong; I always considered it a difficult subject, and one that required great care and prudence; and I tried thus to treat it. It will probably be said, that I succeeded badly. Be it so. We are not always accountable for our success. We are to "*minister according to the ability that God giveth.*" "*Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God giveth the*

increase.” The following facts most of which are known to many of you, prove that I at least *tried* to use prudence and caution on the matter.

When I undertook to form a Colonization Society among you, I consulted and procured the names of a number of respectable and influential slaveholders, as willing to meet and take the subject under consideration. I obtained the consent of several respectable laymen to take the lead in the matter, to address the meeting on the subject; and finding in one case more ardour on the subject of emancipation, and more disposition to connect that with the plan of colonizing than I thought advisable, I dissuaded blending the two,—advised moderation; and when opposition was made to forming a society, I thought it best to give it up for the present, and stated to a number of persons my reasons for so doing. A society was not formed.

With the consent of the Session, I took up a collection in the church for the Colonization Society. But finding that some were dissatisfied, it was not done the two following years; although I had the consent of the session; and on one occasion, had announced it. I yielded to an opposition kept alive, as I had reason to believe, by a few.

The same reason induced me to refer but very seldom to the subject of slavery in preaching. In the period of between three and four years, I referred directly to it not more I think than that many times; and then usually in a general way, while I was greatly desirous of adopting some plan for improving the condition, and bringing about the liberation of the slave property held by the congregation;\* I thought it best to use caution in the matter. I imparted my views to some prudent, influential laymen, who felt the propriety of doing something. I let them know that I was willing to bear my part of the expense; yea, to make sacrifices, if any effectual plan was adopted. I however thought it best that laymen should take the lead in the matter.

\* The congregation in their associated capacity own a number of slaves—about seventy. They are hired out from year to year, and the proceeds are the chief item with which they pay the salary of their pastor.



And with respect to liberating my slaves; while as a matter of duty, I should most likely at all events have done it; still the time and the manner and even the effect it would have on the slave question, were not unthought of. I did not, it is true, consult many, but I did consult some. I consulted a gentleman of great worth, who holds a large slave property, has deservedly a great influence among you, and from his public character and extensive acquaintance, had the best opportunity of knowing the public feeling, as to the effect emancipating slaves and sending them to the Colony, would have on the general cause. He gave it as his opinion that it would have a good effect. I inquired whether, in his opinion, it would give offence? He said no, assuredly not, in his opinion, and stated that he had been looking among his own slaves, to see if there were not some of a suitable character to send out. I did not, it is true, tell him my reasons for making the inquiry. The inquiry, however, was made with especial reference to my own case; and his opinion had an influence in removing an apprehension that I might offend some by liberating my slaves and sending them to Liberia; and the poor unfortunate piece in the Visitor, was, to little purpose, as it may seem, the subject of prudential consideration. After concluding that I ought, in way of answer to many things that had been said, given my views of slavery, I was in some doubt as to the best mode of doing it. It would have been more agreeable to me, and suited my immediate object better, to have done it from the pulpit. It was a religious, and not a political question, that I meant to discuss; and of course it belonged to the province of the pulpit. There were, however, usually a few slaves in our worshipping assemblies, and I thought such discussions not prudent before them. I had no wish that *they* should know anything about it. It was the duty of *the master* that I meant to discuss, and not that of the slave. It occurred to me that a few numbers in the Family Visitor, a religious paper, taken chiefly in religious families, would be the least exceptionable mode I could adopt. Few coloured persons can read, none took that paper, and perhaps few ever read it. It did not occur to me as possible that any great offence could be given by arguing the case freely and even

strongly in its pages. The appeal was made to professors of religion—to the masters and mistresses of slaves. I did not, it is true, gravely tell them that said piece was not to be read to their slaves. I took it for granted that they would have common sense enough to know that.

The first and second numbers gave, I believe, no offence. Within a few days after the publication of the third, I received a note from the editor stating that he had been advised not to publish any more pieces on that subject, as possibly they might give offence. I wrote to him to discontinue them, as I had no wish to do that.

A few individuals in various quarters may not have liked the piece. I did not expect all to like it. Little notice, however, was taken of it, except among you, and in a few neighbouring places after hearing from you.

I am aware that some friends of the Colonization Society have represented me as injuring that cause by what I did.

The piece about which the complaint was made, does not contain one word about the Colonization Society, its objects or plans. I did not write it as a friend of colonizing, but as an enemy of slavery. The argument rests on other grounds, and desires no aid from colonizing plans.

If that Society was injured by prejudices resulting from their having given a passage to my slaves to the Colony, it was an unlooked for evil. When I asked a passage for them, I no more apprehended an evil to the Society than the Society did in granting it. I believe, however, that the real interest of the Society has not been injured, but promoted.

There was evidently in the public mind at that time, and especially in the non-slaveholding states, a diversity of opinion and feeling respecting the objects and bearing of the Colonization Society. Some considered it as a scheme of slaveholders to get clear of the free coloured people, that they might hold with a more enduring grasp the slaves. Others looked at the indirect bearing of the plan, and hoped that slaveholders would free their slaves and send them to the Colony. There was evidently a hesitancy in the minds of many, who are now the fast friends of the institution. They were willing to benefit the free, but disliked

to do so at the expense of the slaves. I, from the first, did believe that its indirect bearing on slavery would be good. I thought the state of hesitancy in the public mind, especially in the non-slaveholding states, required that a practical proof be given of the tendency of the Society—a proof that all would understand. I thought it time that some slaves were freed to go out under the patronage of the Society. I offered mine, and they were acceptd.

If there were any who wished to remove the free coloured people for the purpose of retaining more firmly the slaves, it is possible that *they* may have been alienated from the Society on seeing its tendency. I believe, however, that it gained more friends than it lost, and those gained are fast friends; those lost must soon have been lost, for this tendency of the Society must soon have appeared.

The above facts will, I hope, be kept in view when the question of imprudence is under discussion. I must defer to another letter a few remarks on the rule by which some measure prudence, as also a few on the objection made against Ministers of the Gospel saying anything about slavery.

Yours, &c.



## LETTER II.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

PASSING by those that are without, some members of the Church, together with several of my brethren in the ministry, appear to consider the circumstance that offence was taken, as ipso facto proof that there has been over-zeal and imprudence. Their rule for judging of zeal and prudence in this matter, it would seem, is, that no offence must be given. If liberating slaves gives offence to any, it must not be done—if speaking or writing against slavery gives offence, that must be avoided—if an apparent justification of slavery be needful to *catch people with guile*, it must be done. The preacher must not offend the people, or they will not hear him, and he will have no opportunity of doing them good. Very plausible certainly! Allow me, however, to request you to compare this rule with those many passages of scripture, which represent ministers as bound to declare the whole truth to their fellow men, “whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear”—as bound to explain truth and enforce duty—to reprove vice and encourage virtue, and leave the event to God.

Or take the more easy and simple test, that of applying this rule to the conduct of the Prophets, Apostles, and our Lord himself. Do you not see that with *one sweep* it will charge with imprudence and over-zeal every teacher from the days of Moses to the last Apostolic man of God recorded in the New Testament? “Which of the Prophets,” said our Lord to the Jews, “did not your fathers persecute?” And he foretold that the same would continue to be the fate of his ministers—“Ye shall be hated of all men for my sake—Brother shall betray brother—Wo unto you when all men speak well of you, for so did the fathers of the false Prophets.” Our Lord repeatedly urged truth when he knew it would offend, and actually so offended multitudes that they went away and attended his ministry no more, and in one case, the displeasure and going away was so general among his followers, that he was left almost alone, and put the question directly to his disciples, who appear to have become restless, “Will ye also go away?”

Or take the case of the apostle Paul, whom I have heard extolled as most consummate for his prudence and skilful management of men and things, so as not to give offence. Please to turn to the account we have of him in the Acts of the Apostles and his own Epistles. You will see at once that he was forever getting into difficulties, and might positively be tracked almost over the world by the commotions that he raised. His very first preaching produced such a ferment at Damascus, that he had to be "let down over the wall in a basket" to escape not only the "Jews," but the civil officers; and no sooner had he arrived at Jerusalem, than he gave such offence to the Grecians that they "went about to slay him." Now we have him "disputing with the Jews at Antioch," and "shaking off the dust of his feet against them"—again, exciting the multitude into a rage at Philippi, by breaking up their gains from sooth-saying; directly we have him raising an uproar at Thessalonica, and charged with "turning the world upside down," and interfering with the "decrees of Cesar," what is now called politics and affairs of state—presently we have him hauled by a mob before Gallio at Corinth—then raising such a stir at Ephesus as "filled the city with confusion," by so preaching against idolatry as to deprive the "craftsmen" of their "gains," and render useless their stock on hand.

He excited commotions repeatedly by urging points that were considered as interfering with the right of property. He was charged again and again with meddling with politics, and even moving sedition, by preaching doctrines that tended to change the existing state of things. We have indeed his own confession that all the churches planted by him in Asia, were "turned away from him," and from an attachment that made them willing to "pluck out their own eyes and give them to him," were become "his enemies," so stoutly had he plied them with offensive truth. This really, at first view, looks as if Paul had laboured in the Gospel to little purpose; and yet he is not more remarkable for the trouble and confusion and everlasting contention of his ministry, than the conclusion he draws respecting the good growing out of them. After he had "five times received forty stripes save one"—"thrice

been beaten with rods"—“once been stoned,” with a thousand adventures in his efforts to escape more handling of the same sort; we find him writing to the Churches, and congratulating himself, while informing them, that what had “happened unto him had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel.”

That Paul was a faithful preacher none can doubt; but that he was a prudent one, according to the above standard, is very questionable. The most earnest attempt recorded of him, to be prudent in the way of giving no offence, was at the earnest request of the elders at Jerusalem. They knew the fiery temperament of that people; and appear to have adopted to some extent the prudential rule, of doing nothing that would give offence. They were desirous that Paul during his visit among them, should act on their principles. They kindly furnished him with a plan for getting along smoothly. And Paul really appears in good earnest to have resolved that for a few days he would be upon his best behaviour and avoid giving offence. He had many inducements for so doing. He was at Jerusalem, on a visit to the mother church, in the company of the apostles and elders; reports to his disadvantage had gone abroad, and now during the feast, when multitudes were collected from all quarters, he had the best opportunity of putting down those reports. In addition to all these reasons, he had again and again been prophetically warned that difficulties were before him, and must, if he ever did, have felt the need of prudence and circumspection. Alas, poor Paul! and poor human wisdom, and prudence, and management! Seven days had not passed, before he had the whole city in an uproar; and the Roman governor, with an army had to interfere to save his life. All the prudential maxims which his brethren had kindly pressed on him were forgotten in a moment. The ardor of his character returned, increased eleven fold by the restraint of seven days. No sooner is he out of the hands of the multitude, who were about to kill him, than he undertakes to harangue them; and driving at once into the very topics of all under the sun most offensive to them, soon raised a clamour almost sufficient to break the slumbers of the dead.

It is well for Paul's character that he was an apostle, and lived at the time he did; and especially well that the account we have of him is in the New Testament, and has the approbation of that sacred volume. Nothing else as appears to me, saves him from the charge of being almost uniformly imprudent,—*if the proper test of prudence be that of giving no offence.* How much benefit he would have received from a course of lectures on prudence by some modern professor of the amiable virtue, I know not. I fear, however, but little. It seems that the elders at Jerusalem had counselled him to little purpose. He had more contention and strife, and raised up more enemies than all the rest of the apostles together; and yet perhaps in the midst of it, did twice as much good as the whole of them.

You will err greatly, if you infer from the above remarks, either that I hold in low estimation ministerial prudence, according to the scriptural import of that term, or that I think much care is not needful to avoid giving unnecessary offence. They are designed to show that many have notions of ministerial prudence, which are wholly unscriptural, and that prudence according to their notion of it is often downright disobedience to God. Ministerial prudence, according to the scriptural standard, has more regard for God than it has for man—it fears him more than it fears man—it is more desirous of pleasing him and gaining his approbation than of pleasing and receiving the approbation of man. It does desire the benefit of man; it may choose out good and acceptable words; it may watch for the most favourable times; it ought to be wise to wise souls; but it does not forget that all its success is from God; nor that God has in his word laid much more stress on a faithful declaration of divine truth than on “excellency of speech,” or “the enticing words of man’s wisdom.”

The inspired teachers, a record of whose ministry we have in the scriptures, evidently felt most deeply solicitous that their ministry might benefit their fellow men. They evidently sought to save their hearers, and they showed this by teaching and exhorting, and reproving them in all faithfulness. In some respects, they accommodated their

teaching to the characters and circumstances of their hearers,—bearing the infirmities of the weak—leading them on from step to step, as they were able to bear it—feeding those with milk who were not able to receive strong meat. All this I admit; yea, more, I insist that in this we have them for examples. It is still *undeniably* true, that this accommodation to the weakness, and especially to the prejudices of their hearers, had its limits. It did not prevent their declaring, at its proper time and place, the whole counsel of God—it did not set a seal on their lips, respecting important branches of moral duty—it did not prevent them from plainly teaching, and faithfully admonishing, and solemnly warning their hearers, on points so offensive, as to expose them to bitter persecution. I appeal to the record.

The minister who can declare the whole counsel of God—give each portion of truth its due explanation, and each duty its due enforcement—and all without giving offence, has much cause of thankfulness. Some, no doubt, have a more happy talent than others for doing this. If a faultless manner, however, would always prevent offence, we might have supposed that men of God speaking as moved by the Holy Ghost—that apostles speaking when filled with the spirit,—and especially that Christ himself, in whom dwelt all the fulness of wisdom and knowledge, would not have given offence. Yet what preachers have ever given more offence, or excited against them more bitter persecutions. “It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his Lord.” The duty of faithfulness, generally considered, all admit. But when we come to its application to particular parts of religious duty—for instance, slavery, then objections are made, and it is perhaps decided to be an imprudent thing to declare the truth of God on that subject.

It is so common to make objections to ministers of the gospel saying or doing any thing on the subject of slavery, that I feel disposed to make a remark or two on that point. Passing by their natural and equal right as citizens, which few will deny, I shall notice the objection to their bringing their religious character and influence as expounders of God’s word, to bear against it.



I must first remark, that there is a very manifest inconsistency in objections of this kind, when made by the American people. No one who has made himself at all acquainted with the history of the American revolution, can be ignorant of the willingness with which preachers were heard when they brought religion and the Scriptures to justify our defending our own liberties; nor with what solicitude their influence and co-operation were sought. There was then no objection to considering liberty as so far connected with religion, as to bring all the force of religion to bear on the question of defending it. The minister who was known to be a *good staunch Whig*, was the more willingly listened to. The Royalists and Tories, it is true, complained of this, and called it preaching politics; but no *good Whig* had any scruples on the matter, or any difficulty in defending the course of the Whig clergy.

Now I put it to your candour, is it fair to take opposite ground as soon as the question is transferred from your rights to the rights of others? How can you in consistency and conscience justify the Whig clergy of the revolution in their continual treating our rights and liberties as moral questions; and at the same time object to their sons, or the hoary heads of the same men, when they only do the same thing? Does not our Lord and Master say again and again, that he is no "respector of persons?" that he has made of "one blood all nations of men," and that we must apply his law impartially to all? On what principle can you require one doctrine to be dealt out, when your rights and liberties are in question, and another when the same question comes up respecting doing justice to those in slavery?

It is not more inconsistent in people to require such "deceitful handlings" of the word of God, and the sacred principles of religion, than it is in ministers to practice it. If they believe that the Americans were justifiable in their separation from the mother country; if they believe that their fathers in the gospel were right in considering that case as having a moral character, and in bringing Scripture and religion to bear on it, they are bound by consistency, yea, by higher obligations, to aid all safe and lawful means for bringing about the emancipation of those in bondage.

Considered as to the rights withholden, the oppressions endured, the evils growing out of their situation, the case of slaves is much more hard than ours was, and of course much more contrary to that religion which was made to interpose its sacred character and powerful influence on our side.

There is this other important point of difference. Scripture is much more plain in condemning oppression, and denouncing the judgments of God against the oppressor, than it is in justifying resistance on the part of the oppressed.

If our fathers, as the Whig clergy taught, were justified in resisting the oppression of England, then the crime of England in thus oppressing, must have been still more plain, and the clergy were justified by Scripture in warning her of her sin.

Now, in the case of personal slavery, which is much worse than political, I claim for the clergy but the right of addressing the oppressor, pointing out his sin, and urging him to cease from it. To the slave, the person oppressed, nothing need be said. When they are addressed, obedience to their master ought be enjoined—patience and contentment with their lot. The object should be to induce their masters to restore to them their rights, and thus prevent a contest for them.

When the divine right of kings was plead in England and this country, to trammel conscience, and prevent our fathers from asserting their rights, the great body of the Whig clergy came forward, and by their preaching and exposition of Scripture, showed that when fairly interpreted, Scripture was in favour of freedom and the natural rights of man. The doctrine *jure divino*, which was then exploded respecting government, is precisely the same which some now plead respecting slavery! Many passages may be found in the Bible fully as strong in favour of monarchy and despotism, as can be found in favour of slavery. We would laugh at the man who would plead them in favour of the one, and yet grave men may be found who plead the other. Religious teachers owe it to God, to their office, and to the best interests of men, to disabuse the public mind, and set forth the true teaching of Scripture on this matter.

I readily admit that there are things in such a sense political, that with them religion has but little, if anything, to do. Whether a people choose to live under a king, or in a republic; whether they prefer hereditary or elective rulers; whether elections be for a long or a short period; whether the legislative, executive and judiciary branches, be in separate hands, or all entrusted to the same individual: whether civil and criminal causes be tried by a judge and jury, or be entrusted wholly to a judge: whether they be tried and decided according to written laws, or according to the natural equity of the case, in the opinion of the court; these, with a thousand such things, may be regulated one way or another, according to the will of the people, without the claims of religion being violated. But whatever form of government they may adopt, the benefit of the people ought to be kept in view. With whomsoever the law-making power may be lodged, equal and just laws ought to be made: whoever is entrusted with the executive department, ought to rule in the fear of God—and those appointed as judges, ought to be a terror to evil-doers and a praise to those that do well.” Whatever the form may be, and whatever the mode of procedure, the substance to be secured and the end to be sought, is the same: justice and honesty, and fair dealing, and well doing, are to be promoted; while dishonesty and injustice, and all evil doing, and hard dealings of man to man, ought to be prevented. Rulers have no moral right to set aside the law of God: and that law embraces our conduct and points out our duty, in all things, both to God and man.

A large portion of the community, are not only destitute of religion, but often ignorant of its claims. Many of those who fill the higher seats in our civil community, and have a chief hand in framing its laws, have not the fear of God before them; and use little if any care to frame laws according to natural equity and the claims of religion. The laws of God, however, do not lose their claims upon society, or individuals, by the fact, that their civil laws may run counter to the laws of God. They remain the same, and the obligation to obey them remains the same, however hand may join in hand, and iniquity be framed by law.



One of the chief means appointed by God for preserving the knowledge and enforcing the claims of his law, is the sacred ministry. Ministers are to act for God, to explain his law, and urge his claims; and woe be to them if they alter, or betray, or are found unfaithful.

It may be worth while to notice a few of those Scriptures, which state the general duty of ministers, and the practical effect of their office on the world.

“For the Priest’s lips should keep knowledge and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.” “Go ye,” says our Lord, “and teach all nations—teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach the same shall be called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” *Malc. ii. Matt. v. 28.*

Their office is represented as of the utmost importance as a means of turning people from sin and saving them from ruin.

“If they had stood in my council and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. Take heed unto thyself and to thy doctrine, continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee.” *Jer. xxiii. 1 Tim. iv.*

All classes of persons, and all the relations of man, are embraced in their comprehensive rules of ministerial conduct: the high and the low, the ruler and the ruled, the moral character of civil regulations, as well as any other kind of moral conduct all are to be tried by the moral law; and according to their agreement or disagreement with that unerring and unalterable standard, is the doer to be addressed with admonition, or warning, or approbation. “Hear the word of the Lord, O King of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou and thy servants and thy people. Thus saith the Lord: execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor; and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow—wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers

by wrong ; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. *Jer.* xxii. ii.

It is a painful fact that many of those from whom they met with most opposition, (*Jer.* xx. 1. xxvi. 8. xxix. 21—32.) made great pretensions to religion ; but had their favourite sinful indulgencies, which they either pretended were not wrong, or were to be tolerated in the existing state of things. There is hardly one faithful prophet of whom we have any account, who did not meet with opposition—a large portion of them were put to death. It is given as the general character of Israel, that “they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets.” *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 16.

This exposure to opposition and suffering, for a faithful discharge of ministerial duty, presented a strong temptation to be unfaithful—to avoid those topics which gave offence, and so shape instructions as to keep in favour with the multitude, and those in power. No one can read the Old Testament, and especially those parts of it that relate to the worst times in the history of Israel, without seeing much proof of this mournful fact. Religious teachers are directly charged with it in many places, and awful judgments are denounced against them for so doing.

“From the Prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely. They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace. I have seen folly in the Prophets of Samaria. I have seen an horrible thing in the Prophets of Jerusalem ; they strengthen the hands of evil-doers, that none doth return from his wickedness.” *Jer.* vi. 13. xxiii. 13, 14.

Jeremiah who witnessed the state of things that preceded the destruction of Judah, often complains that many religious teachers, instead of aiding to stem the torrent of iniquity, took part in it, and by precept and example encouraged others in their evil way. Some of them took part against Jeremiah, represented, and treated him as a troubler of Israel, for faithfully reproving them for their sins.

After the ruin took place, which he had laboured so faithfully to prevent, in his lamentations over it, he refers to the course which those unfaithful teachers took, as the

crowning cause of the calamity. "Thy Prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity: but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment." *Lam. ii. 14.* And it deserves particular remark that personal slavery was the special sin for which more than any other, the kingdom of Judah was thus visited. Any one may see this by comparing the twenty-second, twenty-third, and thirty-fourth chapters of Jeremiah. The case will be more fully noticed hereafter.

Had we a fair and full account of the reasons plead by the people in justification of their course, notwithstanding the solemn remonstrances of Jeremiah, and had all the reasons of the teachers who took sides with the people against him; we would in all probability have, to a considerable extent, the same reasons and excuses that are urged now in justification of slavery. Jeremiah was charged with "*not seeking the peace*" and interest of the Jews, in thus remonstrating with them for their sins. It was said that he "*weakened the hands of the men of war,*" and thus would ruin the nation. It was probably supposed that their temporal interests and safety required the Prophet to be silent on those points, about which he warned them; that either those things were not wrong, or they were beneficial notwithstanding, or the present state of things, made it inexpedient to effect at present the reformation which the Prophet pointed out. How far this is the course many now take respecting slavery, is known to all. Unless a change takes place, the time will come, and sooner than many are aware of, that the "*folly will be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.*"

Yours, &c.

**LETTER III.**

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE great objection to all discussion of the subject of slavery, is that it is fraught with danger. It may be proper to offer some remarks on this point, before I proceed to said discussion.

The objection that it is a dangerous subject, and therefore ought not be discussed, is, I believe, made by two classes of persons, and for different reasons. One class make this objection, not that they apprehend danger; that at least is not their reason for making it. They love slavery, have no heart to give it up. They wish to perpetuate it and have their gains from it. They see the progress of opinions favourable to emancipation, and experience it more and more difficult to find reasons that carry any tolerable justification of it. To be drawn into discussions of the subject in this state of things, is not a little vexatious to them, and the most plausible way for wholly preventing it, is to raise the cry of danger. Behind this, they can take shelter, and in part conceal the fact, that they have "exhausted their arguments" in favour of slavery. Now I put it to your candour, whether these persons are entitled to the benefit of such a protection. You will find this whole class of persons doing nothing to put away the evil, and remove the danger. This holding out false colours and using false papers to prevent capture is, to say the least, a stratagem in war, to which great and honourable minds seldom if ever stoop.

There are, however, persons who really fear danger from the discussion of this subject; and are perfectly honest in making this objection. They apprehend that in some way or other, it may lead to evils of a most serious kind; and, therefore, can hardly help feeling as if their safety and peace were trifled with, by persons that talk, and especially write and publish against slavery. They feel more or less, the evil and iniquity of the system, and would cheerfully concur in any safe and practicable mode of removing it; but until such mode be adopted, they think that safety requires silence.

Great respect is due to this class of persons. To lightly disregard their wishes, to trifle with their feelings, would be cruel, would be unpardonable. I hope I am incapable of doing it. A multitude of things must ever bind my affections to the South. Before my time of life, a man's views, and feelings, and habits, are usually so settled and fixed, as seldom to undergo much change. I was born in Virginia, where my parents have spent a life of near fourscore years. All my life, a few months excepted, has been spent there. Almost all my relations are there, or in slaveholding states; and most of them are slaveholders. All my early associations, all those untold bonds that bind us to the scenes of infancy and youth, most of those moral ties which unite us to those we have laboured to instruct, for whom we have often prayed, and with whom we have "taken sweet council, and gone to the house of God in company" are Virginians.

"With all thy faults I love thee still, my country—and still *must love thee.*"

My treating of the difficult, and to many offensive subject of slavery, does not arise from any want of attachment to the South, or any disregard to its interests—much less does it arise from a disposition to trifle with the wishes or fears of those who may have fears on this matter. If I believed that discussion would have the effect which some apprehend from it, it would be with me a weighty consideration against ever publishing one line on the subject. But after looking at the matter on all sides, and giving it a good deal of consideration, I am strongly inclined to the opinion that the danger attending slavery in the South depends very little, if at all, on a temperate discussion of the subject.

I agree with those of you who think that slavery is a matter fraught with danger—a danger much greater and more near than many seem to suppose. But I wholly differ from you as to the supposed effect of discussion. The causes of danger I apprehend are independent of discussion, and will be very little affected by it; yea I am inclined to the opinion that, taking things *as they are*, nothing will have a more direct tendency to avert the danger and lead to its final removal, than temperate, but free and



full discussion of the whole matter. This opinion, the result of a good deal of reflection, will, I hope, in part at least, serve as an apology for pursuing a subject known to be unpleasant to you. It is due to you to give reasons for this opinion. For the purpose of doing this, allow me to call your attention to the state of things among us, and in the South generally, as regards slavery and its dangers, independent of discussion—and then to the superadded effect of discussion.

Unless I am greatly mistaken, nine-tenths, perhaps nineteen-twentieths of the circumstances that make and increase the danger from slavery, are wholly independent of any discussion of the subject. If the subject were never mentioned, nor even thought of by slaveholders, still the following facts would exist.

There is in the United States above two millions of slaves, and above three hundred thousand free coloured people, and mostly in the slaveholding states. Together they amount to above one-sixth of our whole population. The southern states, which contain all but a fraction of this people, do not contain one-half of our white population; so that the proportion of blacks to whites, in the whole of the South, is more than one to two, or about four to seven.\*

It ought to be recollected also that the interior and upland parts, the mountainous and grain-growing districts, have a larger proportion of whites—leaving a much larger proportion of blacks in the low country, the sea-board, the cotton, tobacco and rice-producing and sugar-making dis-

	Whites.	Blacks.	Free Col.
* Virginia, E. of B. Ridge,	375,655	416,320	47,005
N. Carolina, . . . . .	472,433	246,462	19,575
S. Carolina, . . . . .	257,878	315,665	7,915
Georgia, . . . . .	296,614	217,740	2,483
Louisiana, . . . . .	89,191	109,631	16,753
Alabama, . . . . .	190,171	117,494	1,541
Mississippi, . . . . .	70,618	65,659	529
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,752,560	1,488,971	89,801
		89,801	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total,	1,752,560	1,578,772	

tricts. Where the whites are most numerous, the blacks are fewest, and where there are most blacks there are fewest whites ; giving in many and large districts a much larger number of blacks than whites.\*

To this we may add that the southern country generally is more congenial to the blacks than to the whites. Their natural increase, owing to climate, labour, early marriages &c. is greater than that of the whites, and many things tend to accumulate them in the South.

While the policy lately adopted by most of the southern states for limiting the introduction of blacks for the mere purpose of traffic, will no doubt in some degree lessen their increase from emigration ; still, under the present or any plan likely to be soon adopted in the South, more blacks than whites may be expected to go there. The traffic will no doubt, to some extent, continue. Means will be found to evade the laws.

Views and feelings opposed to slavery are travelling southward. They are now operating powerfully in Maryland, the north and western parts of Virginia, and in some parts of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri. With some, these views and feelings are accompanied with the generous resolution of not selling but freeing their slaves. But with a much larger number, self-interest still predominates. Public sentiment, they see, begins more and more to be against slavery. They begin themselves to be ashamed and tired of it ; but have no heart to give up property. They apprehend that the time is not remote when it will be disgraceful to sell a fellow creature : public sentiment will yet bear it. They make some excuse for selling ; and a negro-trader who has marked how much more they sell for in the south, than they can be bought for in the middle states, buys them—and for a profit of one or two hundred dollars, can in some way get them sold in the south, legislative precautions to the contrary notwithstanding.

The character of the coloured population carried to the

\* East of the Blue Ridge, in Virginia, are 375,936 whites and 457,013 blacks ; giving the blacks 81,077 of a majority in that region.

south, is of a cast well calculated to have a great effect on those already there. The same views and feelings which, along the northern border of the slaveholding states, are so operating on the whites as to loosen the bands of slavery, must, from the nature of the case, be received more or less by the slaves themselves. They have higher notions of liberty, and more impatience under bondage, and make a nearer approach to freemen in their habits and general character.

On an examination, I doubt not, it would be found that along the slave border, and in those districts where the slave is least valued for his labour, and from which many are carried to the south; they live better, are less pressed with labour, and have more information than in other parts of the country. Of those sold to the south there is a pretty large proportion of the most intelligent—those possessed of the highest notions of liberty, and of the injustice of withholding it from them. These are taken to the south—often sorely against their wills, mingled with the black population already there, and pressed down to the same level. Their mode of living, their treatment, and privileges, undergo a great change; and that change is against their comfort, and at the expense of what they have long considered as due to them. I can hardly conceive a state of things better calculated to impart information and discontent to all. It is a leaven that must soon leaven the whole lump.

It ought to be added, for it cannot be denied, that among those carried to the south, there are some who of right are free;\* and many who fully expected that they themselves,

\* In 1826 it was ascertained that about thirty free coloured persons were kidnapped from the city of Philadelphia, and sold for slaves in the south. There may have been others.

Within less than one year from September, 1827, the Benevolent Society of Alexandria reported twelve coloured persons whom they had rescued from the slave traders, who were taking them to the south; all of whom were free, as was fully believed. They were all from Maryland. Other free coloured persons, it was believed were carried through during the same period, whom they were not able to rescue.

A gentleman of the Bar in Baltimore informed me, that at one term he brought before a Judge, by a writ of Habeas Corpus,



or at least their children, would be free. The prospect of perpetual slavery for themselves and children, must be to such not a little gloomy ; and when they look about them, and see how much more numerous they are than the whites—how much better able to bear the climate, and how many of the whites have to leave the country in the sickly season, it must have a fearful tendency to beget thoughts of shaking off the yoke and making themselves free. There are many other things connected with this subject that look the same way.

Our whole system of political institutions is in constant operation before the eyes of that people. If comparatively few of them understand all the details, the fundamental principles are known to most. It is impossible to hide from the great body of them the fact, that they are held in slavery in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of our free institutions.

The general facts of the American revolution are known to the coloured population. Many of their fathers witnessed it, and yet live to repeat its details to their children, and tell them how the whites became a free and independent people. Take coloured persons of plain common sense, and I suppose that nineteen out of twenty, perhaps ninety-nine out of a hundred, of those above twenty-five, know that the whites are free, because they made themselves free ; and that the blacks are slaves, because thus far the whites have been able to hold them in slavery. They know that power and not right sustains the claim of the whites over them.

To tell them that religion allows holding them in slavery, that the Bible justifies it, will be much more likely to make them disregard the Bible, and prejudice them against its teachings ; or, what is more likely, and much more common, make them discredit the fairness and religious sincerity of the whites, than reconcile them to their condition ; and for the plain reason known to the

twelve or fifteen coloured persons, who were to be sold on the next day as runaways for their jail fees ; all of whom but one were found to be free persons, and set at liberty. Had he not interfered, all of them, it was believed, would have been sold into slavery.

whole of them, that the whites do not think so in their own case.

The custom of using slaves as household servants, must, from the nature of the case, impart much information to them, and in some degree supply the place of a regular education. Perhaps I would not go beyond the truth were I to say, that one half, or two-thirds of the coloured people in the United States, have performed, or do to a greater or less extent, perform the duties of household servants. In that way they are so near their masters as to hear a great deal of conversation on almost all subjects. To a great extent the most intelligent and active young slaves, from the age of six or eight to that of sixteen or eighteen, are employed to wait in the house. When able to do common labour in the field, they are sent out, and their place at the house supplied with others, and the same course is gone over again. This is the period of life, be it remembered, in which most is done to form the character and give it a fixed direction. At no time are the imitative principles more active—at no time does the character receive more influence from those about us. In the presence of these young slaves we talk on all sorts of subjects; go over the events of the revolution; extol our fathers for asserting and maintaining their liberties; speak of national and state rights, and discuss the endless questions that grow out of them; praise our free institutions as founded on more just and equitable principles than those of any other people, and take to ourselves great credit for securing and defending them.

Some attention may perhaps be paid to sending out of the room the grown slaves, while the subject of slavery is discussed; while no attention is paid to the young slave, on whom the conversation may possibly have a much more decided effect.

In conversing with a highly respectable gentleman on this matter, he related an anecdote in point. He had dining at his table, a foreigner of some distinction; he had waiting on them a coloured boy, so small as not to be regarded in their conversation. The subject of slavery came up, perhaps suggested by seeing the boy; and the foreigner, half jest and half earnest, rallied him on the inconsistency

of slaveholding with his republicanism. He admitted the inconsistency, averred that slavery was wrong, but turned it off in the common way,—that it was the custom of the country, and he could not well help falling into the common practice. After rising from table they left the room, leaving in it a white youth, who was also a foreigner, and said negro boy. No sooner were they out of hearing than the little slave addressed the youth, “Did you not hear that?” said he, “I have as much right to be free as any of you.” His manner showed that he was not likely to forget it.

The very fact of sending out the grown slave, in the time and manner in which it is mostly done, not only induces them to use various artifices to hear what is said, as in truth they are often known to do, but serves as a watch-word to excite the attention of the young. Its curiosity is excited, and it perhaps knows full well that it will be questioned by the grown slaves as to what the white folks talked about after sending them out. In truth the commonness of having slaves about us, our habit of speaking freely and constantly before them, puts most persons off their guard; and things are constantly said before them, which must have an effect on their opinions and feelings and general character. I do not think it possible for a system of slavery, such as obtains among us, to co-exist with our free institutions, and our general habits of talking freely on all subjects, without a constant and powerful effect being produced on the slave population. We are a talking people, and a people who love dearly to be waited on; and we cannot refrain from the former, even while the slave is doing the latter.

There is, I think, to a considerable extent, a preference given to the mulattoes for house-servants. They are the neatest, the best looking, and for the most part the most intelligent and active. Other equally natural reasons might be imagined as having an influence. But what I have in view chiefly is the fact that while their complexion proves their relationship to the whites, and while most can but conjecture the particular individual to whom they are related, there is no reason to doubt but that the mulattoes themselves mostly know from the mother, and especially

when the individual is considered wealthy or respectable. To find themselves neglected and despised, perhaps sold or left in bondage by those so nearly related to them, must be bitter and galling, and may be expected to beget deep hatred of the whites by whom it is so commonly practised.

There is no doubt such a thing as family traits of character, as to talents, mind, disposition, &c. Its character may not be as strongly marked as some have supposed; but it is in the face of all observation, wholly to deny it. That the high notions of liberty, the ardent feeling and proud unbending spirit of the south, should be imparted with their blood to the mixed race so numerous among them, is what must be expected. Many mulattoes know that the blood of the first families in the south runs in their veins, they feel its proud, impatient, and spirit stirring pulsations; and see themselves cast off and oppressed by those who gave them being. Such a state of things must produce characters "fit for treason, stratagem and spoil."

The state of things abroad, the revolution in the south, the condition of the West Indies, the progress of liberty in Europe, all have a bearing on this subject. These topics are often the subject of conversation, and that before our slaves. Our fourth of July celebrations, and balls of the 22d are attended, and the events they commemorate talked about.

The servants who attend their masters on these occasions, wait at the tables, and hear their toasts, &c., must be destitute of common sense not to learn something.

The visit of General De Lafayette, with the excitement it produced from Dan to Beersheba, with the dinners and toasts, and speeches and balls, and processions, and talk about our struggle for liberty, and our gratitude to him for espousing our cause, &c., gave a lesson to our slaves about the worth of liberty and the way to get it, which they will not forget during the present generation.

The continually increasing intercourse between the Southern States and the West Indies, Mexico and South America, together with the large coloured population there, and the free condition in which many of them now are, and most of them will before long be, in the whole of those

countries, must greatly increase the danger in the south. Every year will make it more difficult to exclude free coloured persons from participating in commercial intercourse with the south. To admit them will be dangerous, yet the enforcement of measures to exclude them, will almost certainly involve us in difficulties with foreign powers, and were the effort to exclude them successful, it could not fail to have a most injurious effect on the south, by the increasing difficulty it would present to a free and open intercourse, not only with those nations that have a coloured population, but from the complex and ramified nature of trade, more or less, with all people.

Nor ought it be forgotten that this is an age of improvement, and activity, and enterprise; a new impulse is given to the public mind; new means have been invented to spread information and operate on the great mass of the community. It is an age of newspapers, magazines, journals and reviews. There is vastly more travelling and going to and fro than formerly; the monuments of liberty are multiplying, and in all these and many other ways, information is disseminated through society, and brought within the reach of the slave. Few slaves, it is true, can read. From this source of information they are cut off; but there are those other thousands of channels at which I have glanced that are open to them, and full to overflowing. The very fact that slaves can neither read nor write, makes them cultivate with more care their memories,\* and like all other illiterate people, be more particular to impart to each other, and instil into the minds of their children, what they wish to be recollected.

Now unless you put down the newspaper system, abolish magazines, journals and reviews, burn the history of the revolution, banish all books of travels, and close the whole concern of printing, you will have laboured to little purpose. To prevent a few essays on slavery will be of little use, while such a mass of floating literature is delug-

\* I have known coloured blacksmiths, who would work all day, do perhaps twenty, thirty, or forty pieces of work for different individuals, and report them at night, with their prices, and the persons for whom they were done, without making the smallest mistake. Many negroes have very good memories.



ing the country, a large portion of which bears more or less directly on the same point. You must tear from your law books, geographies, gazetteers, and other volumes, the declaration of independence, the bill of rights, the state constitution and other matters, that relate to personal rights, and not leave them in your libraries or on your tables, to be looked into by your house-servants, the very ones that can read. Nor ought you to omit to destroy those beautiful prints of the declaration of independence, which hang in your parlours, with the words *free, liberty, independence*, in such large letters, as seem to invite the particular attention of the slave,\* not forgetting to put out of sight the prints of Washington, Jefferson, De Lafayette, and other worthies, and even forbid any to repeat their names, which are so connected with freedom, that almost every slave in the land, when he hears the one will think of the other. In short, a volume would not tell all that you must do if you would arrest the march of freedom, and remove all those things that beget thoughts of it in the mind of the slave.

These causes, to which many more might be added, are in constant operation; whether the subject of slavery be discussed or not. They depend very little on discussion, and to me, they appear of a most alarming character. So far have things progressed, that we know not what an hour may bring forth. It is possible that the present state of things, with its progress, may last a number of years before any serious event takes place; but unless things are arrested or given a new direction, take place they will, as certainly as effect follows its cause. And in an age like the present, when greater changes take place in a few years than formerly took place in a century, we know not but it may be at the very door. Their present number,

\* The declaration of independence not only declares that freedom is an unalienable right, but that it is the *right* and the *duty* of a people to resist a government that does not protect it. And it gives a statement of the things which justified our fathers in resisting the government of England. A glance at them may satisfy any one,—will certainly satisfy the slave that his case is a hundred fold harder.

increase, and situation in the South, makes it almost morally certain, that the event is not very remote.

While slavery continues, their increase is likely to continue. The common checks on population in this country, do not much affect them. The care of providing for themselves and families, does not lie on them, but on their owners.

Let any one compare the whites with the blacks, as to the age at which they marry, and the number who do not marry at all, and he will see one reason of the greater increase of blacks in the slaveholding States. Most slaves marry, and that early. But many whites do not marry until late in life, and a good many not at all. White maidens of thirty, forty, and even sixty may be found in every neighbourhood; but black ones of those ages, are almost as scarce as white black-birds. Many lovely and deserving women, live and die in single blessedness, who but for slavery, would have been blessed much more to their liking. Slavery has made it so expensive to maintain a family, that the men who would have mated with them, feared to marry, or have gone abroad in search of a living, or have ruined their morals, and made a slave the mother of their children.

Nor ought we to forget that this is emphatically an age of freedom. Some twenty or thirty years had to pass before the world had confidence in the ability of man to govern himself, and in the stability of our free institutions. Confidence is at last gained, and admiration has followed in the multitude, and the effect has already shown itself in South America and Europe, and in the louder and louder murmur of displeasure against slavery, and the deeper sympathy felt for every people who attempt to be free.

The state of things in England, with respect to slavery in the West Indies, and indeed throughout her colonies, justifies the belief that the West Indies will soon be in the hands of the blacks. The footing on which the coloured population is placed in Mexico and South America generally, with the feeling of those States towards liberty; the fact that many of their leading men are of the mixed race, all serve to show that those nations must be counted as on the side of freedom.



In our intercourse with them, causes of dispute are often taking place, and in the wars that may arise, what may we not fear from the use they may make of our slaves to break our power?

In twenty years hence we will have near four millions of slaves in the South. Were fifteen or twenty thousand men with a large portion of officers, together with one or two hundred thousand stand of arms, to land at some two or three places, and proclaim freedom to the slaves, and give them arms and engage to lead them, what is there that without a miracle, could save the South?

Or were the slaves by some successful stratagem, or taking advantage of some emergency, or betrayed into resistance, without any premeditated design, by some act of individual oppression, or some one of those thousand things which, in a moment of passion, leads to acts for which no pardon can be hoped, and thus forces to self-defence, lead them to make and maintain for a time a contest for freedom, who can doubt but that they would receive aid from abroad? I know that there is a prejudice against the blacks, but I am much deceived if it be as great anywhere else as among ourselves. It is not much felt among most nations of Europe. And the injury which that prejudice has done them, is now seen and felt, and is awakening a deep sympathy for them. With a large portion of the civilized world, no people would have more sympathy and better wishes for success, in an effort to be free. After what we have done to shake the throne and displace the mitre, our continuing to practise slavery, and that of the very worst form, is viewed by most civilized nations as peculiarly inconsistent and well meriting severe retribution.

Now the additional effect which a free but temperate discussion of this whole matter would have on the progress of things, could not be much; and I am strongly inclined to the opinion, that it would really operate the other way; that it would operate as a protecting and countervailing cause. Many of the chief causes of danger it could not add to. It certainly could not increase the coloured population—it could not retard the natural increase of the whites—it could not affect the physical force of either, and its

moral effect on the blacks would hardly be felt, among those many causes now in constant operation.

But as a countervailing and protecting cause, it would be of most important utility. It would enable us to get the dimensions of the evil and danger, to view it on all sides, and form correct opinions respecting it. A correct knowledge thus obtained would not only be an indispensable preparation for adopting the proper course to escape the danger, but furnish the proper motive to reconcile us to that course.

It must be evident to all who have paid any attention to the subject, that there is not barely a diversity but a contrariety of opinion in the community respecting the extent and nearness of the danger. Some think the danger is little, and that little may safely be left to our children and grandchildren to guard against. Others think there is really no danger that deserves the name. But there are others, and among them many persons who have thought much on the subject, who believe that the danger is great, and if not immediate, yet from its peculiar nature and rapid increase, and the difficulty of averting it, demands that not an *hour* be lost in using all the means in our power to put things in such a train as may most effectually secure us against it.

If the first or second opinion be correct, it would calm many fears to be satisfied of the fact. But if the last be correct, it is surely better to know it, and that as soon as possible. There is no question that more deeply affects this country. It would be of unspeakable importance to have it rightly understood. Discussion is the best way to bring it before the great mass of the community, and they alone can manage the evil.

It is possible by means of discussions in the public prints to disseminate so much information through the community, as to give rise to a general sentiment, that the interests and safety of all parties require that some plan be speedily adopted to put an end to slavery. It would at least throw light on the question, whether the benefits of slavery were worth the danger growing out of it, or whether the system could not be so changed as to get clear

of the danger, and yet retain most of the benefits resulting from the employment of that people as the labouring class?

As the danger is real, it appears to me not wise to refuse to look fairly at it; and I know of no way so likely and effectually to turn the public attention to it, as discussion. It could, no doubt, have been done with more ease twenty years ago, without letting the slaves know it, than now; but it can be much more easily done now, than twenty years to come; for I much suspect that twenty slaves will then read the newspapers to one that does now, and we will then have near twice the number.

That some slaves would, through the conversations they might hear, find out that the whites were discussing the subject, is very probable. But that evil would be more than balanced by the benefit of keeping the attention of the whites to the subject; and the information they would receive of the nature and extent of the danger—and the very fact that the slaves knew that the attention of the whites was directed particularly to the subject, would keep them to their best behaviour. Men do not engage in mischief, when they know they are watched. And farther, the hope which discussions of that subject might beget in them, that some plan would be adopted by the whites tending to their freedom, would have a natural tendency to prevent them from resorting to rash measures. They must know that it will be no easy matter for them to get free without the consent of the whites, and they, no doubt, would prefer the prospect of freedom, with the good-will of the whites, even at a distant period, yea, were it only as a heritage for their children, than run the danger attending an unsuccessful attempt to go out free.

As to discussion suggesting to them thoughts of freedom, I doubt not they will have them whether the subject be discussed or not. To suppose that the great body of them are ignorant of the real state of things between them and the whites, is to suppose them destitute of common sense. To suppose that all they see of the operations of our free institutions—all they hear about national, state, and personal rights—all they hear about the South American and European contest for freedom, never leads them to think of their own case, is, I apprehend, only to deceive our-

selves. We may wish them not to apply these and a thousand such things to their own case; but it is human nature to do it. If a brute animal sees another in good pasture, it will try to get in too—if a sheep sees another jump out of a pen, it will try to follow. Those slaves that have not sense enough to apply to their own case a thousand things which they hear and see daily, would be very little more affected by discussions, simply because they had the word slave occasionally in them.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER IV.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE origin of negro slavery in this country—the monstrous injustice and wickedness that attended the slave-trade—the state of servitude in Europe, and especially in England, compared with that to which negroes were subjected, and the leading features of slavery, as now existing among us, may very properly be noticed, before we apply the Scriptures to it, to ascertain its moral character.

It is generally known that negro slavery was introduced into this country about two hundred years ago, soon after the first settlements were made. The number at first was small, but continued gradually to increase, until slaves became a constant article of traffic.

The manner in which they were obtained in Africa, enabled those engaged in it to realize such a profit as tended greatly to keep it up; and at the same time held out great temptation to conceal the monstrous iniquity with which it was attended. Plausible pretences were used to excuse, and even give the colour of piety to a trade which was carried on in violation of all the commands of God, and every principle of humanity and justice. It is distinctly stated in the histories of those times, that both queen Elizabeth and Louis XIII., in whose days it began, had scruples about the lawfulness of it; and did not give their consent until they were assured that the negroes were brought over with their own free consent, and that it was the most ready way to convert them to Christianity.

It was easy then, to what it is now, to conceal things from the great mass of the community. There was not one-thousandth part the means of gaining information of what was going on. There was not in existence until 1588, such a thing as a newspaper. The one then established did not indeed deserve that name, but was rather, if my recollection of its history be correct, a circular issued a few times and then discontinued and forgotten. It was long afterwards before regular newspapers were printed; and all know that it was not until lately that they, together with Magazines, Reviews, Journals, &c. became so important a vehicle of information.

The mode in which the great body of slaves brought from Africa were obtained, was known to few, except those who were deeply interested in the trade, until thirty or forty years ago, when the question of putting a stop to it was before the English parliament. The trade had been going on for one hundred and fifty or two hundred years. Great opposition was made to having it stopped. Long and repeated efforts were made to conceal the manner in which slaves were obtained. So deep was the offence which Clarkson committed in Liverpool, by his efforts to induce persons who personally knew the facts, to come forward and state them, that he had to seek his personal safety by flying from that place. So much information, however, was brought out by long examination of witnesses, that thousands and tens of thousands were shocked and confounded at the monstrous guilt that attended it; and parliament passed a law prohibiting the trade.

Clarkson estimated that at least one-half of those brought over were kidnapped, more or less privately, and carried and sold into perpetual slavery in this country, without even the charge of an offence. He thus classed the whole, after a long and careful examination of the subject:—1. Kidnapped. 2. Inhabitants of villages broke up. 3. Convicts for some real or alleged crime. 4. Prisoners taken in wars mostly waged for the purpose of procuring them for the slave-traders. 5. Those born slaves. 6. Those who had lost their liberty by gambling. 7. Sold for debt.

None of these could be a just cause for perpetual slavery. But of most of them it will not be pretended that they were. More than one half literally kidnapped! Add to these the prisoners, those sold for debt, &c. and you will have perhaps six-sevenths of those sold for slaves in this country, and whose children are now in slavery, who were as free in their own country as you are—had their property and family comforts about them, and have, without any crime been torn from all, and doomed with their children to perpetual slavery! And some even take offence at all efforts to induce those who hold them to let them go out free!

Very soon after the trade commenced, it was found more cheap to kidnap, seize by force, or take by fraud, than to buy from those who may have had a few to sell.



Although a kind of slavery prevailed more or less among the Africans, it was of a very mild character. Much of a supply could not be obtained by fair purchase, and that at an expense which the traders wished to avoid. Other ways than that of fair purchase were resorted to. Sometimes means were taken to get a large number of persons on ship-board, and then all were seized and made slaves. Companies landed and took forcibly all they could get hold of; villages were surrounded in the night—set on fire;—those who resisted were killed or disabled, and all they could take sold into slavery. By going to different parts of the coast, many were obtained in these ways. At length, however, so much alarm was produced that many tribes either left the coast, or, taught by experience the wiles of the trader, were so much on their guard, that new measures were found necessary. Trading-houses were then established on the coast, and engagements made with the kings and head-men to furnish slaves. They were induced by presents of spirits and goods to make war on other tribes for the sake of getting prisoners—to kidnap all they could—to procure by any means slaves for the traders. Thence arose a systematic course of war and plunder among the tribes. Head-men made war for the sake of getting prisoners. Private individuals kidnapped whom they could, (often of their own tribe,) hurried them to the trader, who gave them some trifle, and sold the sufferer into perpetual bondage. Selling to the trader became the common punishment for crime—for suspected crime—for pretended crime; and often a whole family was sold for the pretended crime of one of its members. The spirit of retaliation between tribes, and jealousy and revenge among families of the same tribe, were thus kept alive, and furnished perpetual objects for the trader.

The lives lost by the wars and plundering to obtain slaves, far exceeded, it is supposed, the number sold into slavery. The avidity of the trader for slaves—the fact that few, if any, of the slaves ever returned to relate what was done with them,—gave an awful horror to being sold to the traders. So overwhelming was this fear, that it was common for slaves, if not prevented, to throw themselves overboard and drown themselves.



The hazard of the climate, and the love of gain, induced most traders to crowd into their vessels more slaves than they could carry with comfort, and to feed them on the coarsest fare; and if scarcity of food or water took place, they often threw slaves overboard. None but those who have read detailed accounts, can well conceive the sufferings of the poor slaves. On an average it has been computed that from one-fourth to one-third died during the passage. I have noticed accounts of many vessels that lost a larger proportion. And when arrived at the place of their future bondage, they were sold, and with little if any regard to their connections as husband and wife, parent and child, or brother and sister. The injustice, the guilt, the blood; the groans and sorrows which none pitied; the tears which no kind hand wiped away; the broken hearts which no one bound up;—who can tell! They are all known to Him who is no respecter of persons, and who hath declared himself a God of recompenses.

One of the most plausible excuses for bringing them over was, that they might be converted to Christianity. Many of them no doubt have been converted. That, however, could not justify the means used to procure them; it could not justify selling them into perpetual slavery; it could only be a pretence, as the whole case showed.

Many, I doubt not, who became slave-holders in this country, have used a commendable degree of zeal, to instruct their slaves in the principles of Christianity. There are, however, some painful facts on this matter. Several things clearly show, that had the negroes professed Christianity in their own country, enslaving them would not have been tolerated by the governments of Europe, under whose protection the colonies were planted. An opinion appears then to have prevailed, that the heathen had no rights; that their lands and property might be taken, and themselves enslaved, simply on the ground that they were heathen. The Pope gave away whole countries, being heathen. The kings of Europe took possession, as of right, of all lands being heathen discovered by their subjects; and made grants or settled colonies in them at pleasure.

The influence of Christianity had either put an end to slavery in Europe, or at least so modified it, that it hardly deserved that name : and had produced a very general impression that a Christian could not lawfully be held in slavery. Some negro slaves, taken to England soon after the trade commenced, learning this fact, obtained baptism at the hands of some minister, and their owners did not venture to retain them forcibly in bondage. Although the conversion of the negroes to Christianity was the imposing excuse for bringing them over, yet the impression that as soon as they professed religion, and were baptized, they would be free, soon began to operate ; and there is incontrovertible proof that it operated, and that extensively, so as to prevent their being instructed and received into the church. There is on record legislative enactments prohibiting the baptism of slaves, without the consent of their owners, and on the alleged ground that it might interfere with the rights of property.\* So much did this opinion and feeling operate against the religious instruction of slaves, that the bishop of London, to whose diocese the English colonies belonged, addressed a circular to the colonists,† and attempted to reconcile them to the instruction and baptism of their slaves, by laying it down as a principle, that *religion had nothing to do with civil rights—that whatever rights they had in their slaves before baptism, they would continue to have afterwards.* This opinion gradually supplanted the other. A remnant, however, of the first opinion still remained, and uniting with a general impression that much information, except how to work, was dangerous in slaves, has led almost universally to discourage, and often directly to prevent, giving instruction to that people.

Slavery may be said to have terminated in England, and been near its end in most of Europe, at the time negro slavery began to be regulated by law in this country. The civil institutions, the rights and privileges of England, were transplanted to America for the benefit of the colo-

\* See Stroud and Stephens.

† See the letter in an account of missions in the British colonies, by D. Humphrys, D. D. Page 257—275.

nists; even English convicts sent over and sold for their crimes, did not go into slavery; but after a temporary service, during which most of their rights as Englishmen were retained, and others only suspended, they regained the whole, and were free. Their bondage never reached their children. In all reason, the negroes, six-sevenths of whom were really charged with no crime, ought not to have been placed on a worse footing. Monstrous as were the crimes of the trader, who kidnapped them, or obtained them by means not more fair; they were hardly more unjust than the conduct of those who degraded the helpless and deeply injured slave, and fixed his condition for life, and that of his children after him, almost on the same level with the brute.

You are so well acquainted with the condition of the slave, as a subject of law and a member of civil society, that it might seem useless for me to make any remark respecting it. Some objections, however, made to my brief reference to that point in the piece above referred to, as well as several other things, have led me to think that as a matter of fact, many have very imperfect information on this point, perhaps having never made it a subject of examination. I will, however, do little more than give you an extract or two from Stroud's Sketch of the Laws on Slavery in the United States, followed with a few remarks. From a careful examination of the laws of all the slaveholding states, the following propositions, with some variation of circumstances, are shown by quotations from their laws, to be common to the whole of the states. The first set of propositions result from the laws, which refer to, and ascertain, the relation of the slave to his master. The second, the relation of the slave to civil society generally.

1. "The master may determine the kind and degree of labour to which the slave shall be subjected.

2. "The master may supply the slave with such food and clothing only, both as to quantity and quality, as he may see proper, or find convenient.

3. "The master may, at his discretion, inflict any punishment upon the person of his slave.

4. "All the power of the master over his slave may be

exercised not by himself only in person, but by any one whom he may depute as his agent.

5. "Slaves have no legal right of property in things real or personal, but whatsoever they may acquire belongs in point of law to their master.

6. "The slave being a personal chattel, is at all times liable to be sold absolutely, or mortgaged, or leased, at the will of his master.

7. "He may also be sold by process of law, for the satisfaction of the debts of the living, or the debts and bequests of a deceased master, at the suit of debtors or legatees.

8. "A slave cannot be a party before a judicial tribunal in any special action, against his master, however atrocious may have been the injury received from him.

9. "Slaves cannot redeem themselves, nor obtain a change of masters, though cruel treatment may have rendered such change necessary for their personal safety.

10. "Slaves being objects of property, if injured by third persons, their owners may bring suit and recover damages for said injury.

11. "Slaves can make no contracts.

12. "Slavery is hereditary and perpetual."

In some points the laws of the several states differ in regard to the above relations of the slave to his master, but in substance they agree.

The following propositions relate to the legal relation which the slave sustains to civil society generally.

1. "A slave cannot be a witness against a white person either in a civil or a criminal cause.

2. "He cannot be a party to a civil suit.

3. "The benefits of education are withholden from the slave.

4. "The means for moral and religious instruction are not granted to the slave; on the contrary, the efforts of the humane and charitable to supply these wants, are discountenanced by law.

5. "Submission is required of the slave, not to the will of his master only, but to that of all other white persons.

6. "The criminal codes of the slave-holding states, bear much more severely upon slaves than upon white persons.

7. "Slaves are prosecuted and tried upon criminal accusations, in a manner inconsistent with the rights of humanity."

On these points, as in the former, there is some variation among the states, but in substance they agree.

It is readily admitted that the laws respecting slaves do not give a full view of their actual condition. Very much will depend on the character of the slave-holders; and the liberal, generous, open-hearted disposition of the better part of slave-holders does, to a considerable degree, make amends for the state of the laws. Still it remains a truth, that the laws of a people are one of the means of knowing the character of a people, and their laws on slavery one means of knowing the condition of their slaves. It is in fact always considered so. And when the law makers are chosen annually by the people, and accountable to the people, the laws may fairly be considered to be what the people wish them to be. Now, as the great design of the laws is to give protection to person, rights, and property, we need but look at the protection which the slave-holders secure to themselves, and compare it with what they secure to the slave, and we will find a greater difference than can, I think, be found under any other system of slavery of which we have any account. Slaves are not, it is true, butchered as they were in Sparta; but butcheries were then common things in the world. Masters have not the power of life and death, as for a time the Roman masters had; but Roman masters had the same power over their own wives and children. The whole state of society has advanced. What we say is, that the condition of the slave, as ascertained by law, compared with that of the master, shows a greater difference under the system of negro slavery, than I think can be found under any other system of slavery in the past or present world.

Take, for instance, the penal laws of the several states, and compare the number of crimes for which the white man suffers death, with those for which the slave, and for the most part the free coloured person, suffers it; for it is a singular fact, that the laws which ascertain and fix the



relation of the slave to civil society, is made in most cases to include the free blacks with the slave.

Slaves are, if I mistake not, liable to death in Virginia for near seventy crimes, for which a white man is not thus punished.

In Mississippi the slave may suffer death for about fifty crimes; the white man for about twelve.

In Georgia the slave for about nine; the white man about four.

In South Carolina the slave for about thirty-six; the white twenty-seven.

In Kentucky the slave for about eleven; the white four.

The Tennessee and Missouri laws are mild. In the former the slave is punished with death in about four cases, and the latter six.

Now, when it is recollected that slaves are seldom taught to read, and in many cases the law forbids teaching them, and that no provision is made to have the laws read to them, the case is peculiarly hard. Add to this the fact, that they are not tried by their peers, and very seldom by a jury, have not a selection of their counsel, and have no property with which to fee him, with various things of this sort, and how poor a protection has the slave compared with what is secured to the whites. It can hardly be doubted, but that slaves may, in many cases, be convicted and executed for offences which it was, humanly speaking, impossible they should know were capital offences, or indeed legal offences at all; for many of those actions made capital in slaves, are not offences against the law of nature, nor offences against the moral law, even if the slave had been taught that law, but offences created by the legislature, that is, by their masters, and no means taken to inform the slave of their existence or their penalty.

The total exclusion of the testimony of a slave in all cases where a white man is concerned, is a great evil, and practically sets aside almost all the provisions made for the benefit of the slave. If, indeed, slaves be incompetent to give testimony, it ought not to be taken against each other. This is, however, always done, and from the absolute power of the whites over them, may be made the means of great injustice. The time was when the testimony of

Papists and Jews were not admitted. This resulted from a prejudice not more unreasonable than that which now excludes the testimony of the slave. At all events, in the absence of other competent testimony, that of slaves ought to be heard, even if it were left with the judge and jury to decide what weight should be given to it.

It is difficult to account for the conduct of our fathers in establishing such a system of slavery. English villanage, then at an end, may in its general nature have been known to the colonists. They may have learned it from their histories and law books; and we might naturally have supposed that in establishing a system of servitude, they, with their knowledge of personal rights, would at most have only revived in its mildest forms that system which their fathers had let go down. Had they so done, the very worst features of the present system would not have existed. To mention a few points:—

Their villains or servants were with few exceptions attached to the soil; and if transferred at all, were transferred with the soil on which they lived. Their habitations were fixed, and their children enjoyed the comforts provided by the care and industry of their parents.

The families lived together; and the civil condition of the child followed that of the father, and not that of the mother, as in slavery among us. The master must be able to give legal evidence, which was the lawful marriage of the parties, that the child was the child of his man-servant. If he could not do this, the child was free. This encouraged lawful marriage, and secured the most important rights growing out of it. It prevented separations. For children born out of lawful wedlock were free. And if the master violated the bed of his servant, said servant went out free.

The testimony of the servant was good except against his own master; and in various cases he had a plea or defence against him.

The burden of proof that he was of right a servant, lay on the master. If the master could not prove his right in the servant, that he was the son of his man-servant born in lawful wedlock, (for that was the proper proof,) or procured from those who could prove a right thus good, the



servant went out free. The presumption was always on the side of the servant, on the side of natural right and equity, on the side of freedom ; and nothing but positive proof set that aside.

These points, to which many others might be added, show the evil and hardship of our slave system, compared with English villanage. The advantage of villanage in protecting marriage, family relations, purity of morals, and domestic happiness, was incalculable. Our slaves have no legal marriage, no protection of family relations ; and yet all who are born of mothers who are slaves, are claimed as property and held as slaves by her owner : and that although the father may be a freeman, yea, a white man ; and what is still worse, the master himself, or his father, or brother, or son, and notwithstanding violence may have been used to accomplish his foul purpose.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER V.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

SLAVERY is involuntary servitude, or it may be defined, a claiming persons as property, holding them forcibly in bondage, and compelling them to serve without wages and that without any personal crime.

That it is contrary to many of the fundamental principles of our civil institutions, all must admit. It is, for instance, directly at variance with the principles laid down as self-evidently true in our declaration of independence. In it we declare that "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are by nature equal, and that they were endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. To secure these, civil government was instituted among men, deriving its just power from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government. When a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing the same object, evinces a design to reduce under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such government, and provide new guards for their security." These principles respecting personal freedom, we are peculiarly bound to regard. No document has received more fully our assent, as respects our own rights. We ought equally to regard the same principles, when they relate to the rights of others. Few documents have been or are more read among us. It was sanctioned by our national and state legislatures;\* acted

\* "That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot by any compact deprive or divest their posterity: namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."—*Article 1, Bill of Rights of Virginia.*

Most of the states, either in their constitutions or bills of rights, lay down the same principles.

upon in our contest with England ; and has been read and gloried in for half a century.

Slavery is directly opposed to these self-evident truths ; is a forcible withholding from others those rights which we declared unalienable, which we contended for in our own case ; is doing systematically one of those things, to prevent which civil government was especially instituted.

It is considered as a fundamental principle, that men should not be judges in their own case, when the rights of others are concerned. In slavery, however, the master is the sole judge, except in the case of life and death, in everything respecting the slave. The food and clothing ; the nature, time, and degree of labour ; the relations and connections, and all that concerns the comfort and happiness of the slave, are in the power of the master.

It is a first principle that children are not to be punished for the crimes, much less for the misfortunes of the parent. But in slavery, the children of those who, so far from injuring their masters, have been labouring for them all their life long, are held in the same hard condition.— See the last letter, as to the relation of the slave to his master, and to civil society generally.

It will perhaps be said, that those principles, although politically true, are not of moral obligation ; and that slavery, although contrary to them, is not contrary to natural or revealed religion, and therefore not morally wrong.

It is my purpose to examine to some extent the teaching of scripture respecting slavery. On the argument from natural religion, or the law of nature, or the law of nations, as it is variously called, I shall say but little, and for the sufficient reason, that the shortest, and plainest, and only sure way of knowing what natural religion does teach, is to go to the Bible. However plainly moral and religious truth may be written on the works of nature, the history of the world proves that man is too blind to read it, until the light of revelation shines upon him. To leave the scriptures, and hunt after truth and duty from natural light, is, if not putting the light wholly out, and hunting for objects in the dark, to turn from the light of the sun, and use a taper so dim as to make it exceedingly difficult in many cases to distinguish truth from error, or genuine from counterfeit. A few remarks, however, I will make.

The law of nature, or the principles of moral conduct discovered by the light of nature, and approved by reason, it is alleged, does not condemn slavery. Now it appears to me most manifest that it does. I can fix on few things which appear to me more opposed to natural equity, and justice, and reason, than forcibly holding our fellow-men in bondage, and compelling them to minister to our happiness at the expense of their own. To me it does appear, that *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*, are, as declared by the fathers of our independence, *endowments of nature*, that are *self-evidently unalienable*. I would like to see a summary of truths admitted to be manifest by the light of nature, that are more plain than is the right which every man has to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, until forfeited by crime. We know that life itself may be so forfeited by crime, that natural law or reason will approve of its being taken away. The same may happen to any other right. I suspect that those who appeal to the law of nature as justifying slavery, have never gone carefully over its principles, and compared them with the unreasonableness and injustice of one rational creature being held as property by another, and compelled to minister during life to his pleasure at the expense of his own.

Man's right of property is founded on his right to himself, to the use of his faculties and limbs, and the products of their labour. That men have a natural right to the fruit of their labour is so plain a proposition, that perhaps few will deny it. But slavery sets aside this right. To attempt to justify this by saying, the slave himself has been acquired as property, and then taking the fruit of his labour is no longer unjust, is little better than a sophism, is changing the ground, but not answering the charge of injustice. For how has the slave been acquired as property? Did he sell himself? In all just sales there must be a *quid pro quo*—a reasonable equivalent. But in the nature of the case, the slave could receive none. He can hold no property—he cannot seek his own happiness, and plainly no man of sound sense would sell himself into absolute slavery. If sold by another, the question returns, what right could that other have in him, what equivalent has he given, or could he give to the slave, for an absolute right

to sell him, and keep the price for which he was sold? To say he owned the parents of said slave, will again allow the question, what equivalent was rendered said parents for a right of property in them? and whatever right may have been acquired in the parent, what right in reason can that give to the claim of property in the child?\*

But slavery is at variance with natural relations, and the duties growing out of them. The relation of husband and wife, of parent and child, are natural relations, and the first and most important relations among men. None are more intimate, none more binding, and none give rise to duties of higher obligation. But slavery controls and sets aside the whole of these at pleasure. It does not even recognize the marriage relation in the slave, although the first gift of the Creator to man. Although the man and wife are one, it separates them on the alleged claim of property. Their children, the fruit of their bodies, it claims on the same plea, and in disregard of the ties and rights of nature. It deprives the husband of the right to protect and cherish his wife, a part of himself; and the wife of the power of being obedient and faithful to her husband. It prevents the parents from performing their natural duties to their children, educating and providing for them: and it makes it impossible for the children to support and minister to their parents. This is wholly at variance with natural religion, and some of the first duties it enjoins on man towards his fellow man.

But more: Slavery is at variance with the natural relations we sustain to God, and the duties we owe him; that we ought to love, and serve, and worship God, is a dictate of the light of nature. But the extent to which the master claims a right of property in the slave, and control over him, may be made to prevent his performing these natural duties. The slave may be kept ignorant of God, and his duty to him; he may be allowed no time for religious duty; he may forcibly be prevented; he may find it impossible to avoid doing what is known to be wrong. Female slaves may be compelled to unclean living, by circumstances from which they have no escape. Their tes-

\* See page 53, and note.



timony is not received, and the power of punishment at pleasure is in the hands of the master. If this be not against natural religion, what is against it?

Most of the special references, which I have seen, to the law of nature on this subject, have been to that application of it, called the Law of Nations. And to me there has appeared in most cases a confounding of what the light of nature and the dictates of sound reason made it the duty of nations to do which is always right, with what in fact nations have done which is often wrong. Natural or national law no doubt justifies self-defence; and so far as a just and necessary self-defence may require the injuring of another in person, rights, or property, it may justly be done; but it cannot justify us in going one hair's-breadth farther. It cannot justify an injury without a just cause, nor beyond its just claims. It may justify killing in self-defence, but only in that case. Slavery cannot be justified on the ground of self-defence. Nations or individuals may possibly, in prosecuting just claims, oblige others to render various services; but it must not be carried beyond the requirements of equity. To infer the moral right of nations or individuals to do things from the fact that others have done them, is not only to invert the rule of morals, but to destroy it. A thing on this supposition becomes right, not because agreeable to reason and equity, but simply because others have done it. The worst crimes might, in this way, be justified.

Nations, I admit, to a great extent have practised slavery; but they have, to as great an extent, practised many other things which few will justify. They have practised injustice; they have oppressed each other. What civil wars have nations waged against nations? What sacking and burning of cities, and wasting of countries, and massacreing of prisoners? What butchering of inhabitants, and abuse of females? None would for a moment infer that these things were agreeable to natural law, because so common! Many of those who acted thus, possibly justified their doing so on the ground that these things were so often done. Others, disregarding or overlooking the natural injustice of the case, concluded that policy, pa-



triotism, or glory required it; or revenge demanded it at their hands.

Now, as a matter of fact, the ancients justified slavery on the same ground that they justified the above practices. It was to a great extent common to consider all as enemies with whom they had no special alliance, and equally common to consider it justifiable to spoil or kill, or take captive and reduce to slavery, their enemies. Whether they had received any injury, had any just cause of complaint, was not the question; but whether they were enemies, or persons with whom they had no special engagements to be friends? and where there was just cause of complaint, the limits of a just satisfaction were seldom regarded. The more common practice was, to do injury to the utmost possible extent. These principles are wholly at variance with the law of nature and the principles of reason.

From these monstrous perversions of the right of self-defence, they justified slavery. From the right of destroying an enemy, they inferred the right of doing what they pleased with him; if his life were spared, the right of enslaving him—of selling him. But the right of enslaving an enemy, does not follow from the right of killing in self-defence. The very fact that he was not killed, but taken captive, proves that it was not necessary to kill him. And having spared him, the claims on him, if any just claims there be, ought to be exacted in a way consistent with natural justice and equity.

Slavery is a state of things that is at variance with the above, and many other important principles of natural religion. I infer, therefore, that natural religion is opposed to it, and gives no authority for reducing persons to that state, or continuing them in it.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER VI.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

I now proceed to examine the teaching of Scripture, respecting slavery. That Scripture often refers to slavery I readily admit; but that it approves of it as morally right, I am satisfied is not the fact; and I hope before I close my examination to adduce proof that will satisfy the candid and unprejudiced that the reverse is the case. That it will satisfy all, that it will satisfy those whose whole effort is to believe slavery not wrong, whose habits and prejudices, and temporal interests, to the amount of thousands, are all on the side of slavery, is too much to expect. There is not a truth of politics, or morality, or religion, that has not been disputed on similar grounds.

It is, however, far from my purpose to charge any person with any more or any other bias on this matter, than naturally may have arisen from education, or resulted from having an interest on one side. We all know the power which early habits, and education, and example, exert on persons to reconcile them to some things and make them opposed to others. Every man who has listened to both sides of a case in controversy between his neighbours, every boy who has heard the disputes of his school-fellows, knows that people are greatly blinded and biassed by selfish feelings. A candid man will own that he is thus liable to see things in a light favourable to his own wishes and interests. So notorious is this fact, that in civil society almost universally, it is admitted that men ought not to be judges, nor even witnesses in their own case. Those who judge in a case in which they are interested, ought, if they would decide it, as the disinterested are sure to do, incline the scale a good deal more against themselves, than their interested views and feelings seem to require.

This holds good as to slavery. Scripture passages which, to those interested or prejudiced, may seem to justify slavery, may to the impartial appear most manifestly, either not to relate to the case, or come far short of justifying it; while other passages, going to condemn it, which some may either overlook or explain away, may appear, as

indeed they are, to the unbiassed, "confirmation strong as holy writ," that slavery is morally wrong.

The extent to which their previous opinions influence persons as to the meaning of Scripture, is much greater, I apprehend, than most are aware of. The history of the past, and the state of things at present, furnishes ample proof of this.

The change of the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, into the real body and blood of Christ by consecration—baptismal regeneration—the doctrine of Purgatory—masses for the dead—the supremacy of the Pope, with many such matters, received now only by the most thorough-going Papists, were immediately preceding the reformation, not only almost universally believed, but considered as plainly taught in various passages of Scripture. We now are astonished that persons could be so blinded or biassed as to find in those Scriptures any support for said notions.

While the reformers broke the spell which bound the public mind to these errors, and rescued the Scriptures from that strange perversion which gave them support; we have ample proof in their history that other errors almost as great, and other perversions of Scripture almost as manifest, escaped detection—yea, were advocated by those same men. All the reformers, almost without exception, believed that heretical opinions ought to be forcibly repressed, and that uniformity in matters of faith ought to be enforced, by the civil magistrate; and considered this as fairly taught in various passages of Scripture. It would not be easy now to find the man who believes that persecution is really at all justified, much less enjoined by those passages.

It requires but little observation to be satisfied that the great confidence which many sectarians have that they are right and all others wrong, depends much more on the bias of mind with which they read the Scriptures, than on the plainness of Scripture testimony in their favour. We refer to that portion of each party that is most sectarian, most confident that they are right, and all others wrong.

The Episcopalian sees, it may be, in the office of the Apostles—in the use of the term Bishop—in the direc-

tion to Timothy and Titus, as well as in other passages, what fully satisfies him that Episcopacy was appointed to be the order of God's house, and at times his charity cannot find any excuses for the Presbyterian and Baptist, that will not partake more of wilful blindness than is at all seemly in pious people. On the other hand, the Presbyterian and Baptist see in the declaration of Christ that his disciples must not lord it over each other, in the promiscuous and interchangable use of the terms Bishop and Presbyter, as also in the fact that there were a plurality of Bishops in the Apostolic churches, satisfactory evidence that Christ intended to leave but one standing order of ministers; and some of them have just about as much difficulty in stretching their charity to cover, if not the sins, yet the errors of their Episcopal brethren, as is found on the other side.

The Baptist sees in the "much water" at Enon, where John baptized, and in the "going down into the water," and "coming up out of it," and in *believing* being placed before *baptism* in several passages, that baptism ought to be administered by immersion, and to none but adult persons; and he is at times sorely tempted to believe that the Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist are kept wrong, not so much from ignorance as other reasons even more criminal.

The Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist, on the other hand, find no difficulty in answering the arguments drawn from those passages; and are, in their turn, not a little surprised that, in the symbolical nature of the ordinance, the application of the terms sprinkling and pouring to the things represented by baptism—in the circumstances in which the Apostles often administered that rite, together with the fact that children were expressly made church members under the Jewish dispensation, and not excluded under the Christian, and that household baptism was often practised by the Apostles—their Baptist brethren should not see that they themselves are in the wrong, both as to the subject and the mode of baptism.

The Methodist thinks it strange that the Presbyterian and Baptist should believe in the doctrines of election and predestination, and that they do not see that falling from

grace is taught in the Scriptures. He is almost affrighted at the consequences which he supposes follow those doctrines.

The Presbyterian and Baptist, however, come forward stoutly in defence of their tenets; answer his reasoning, explain away his examples, and ply him with arguments and Scripture, until the field of debate is to him a field of tribulation.

More illustration is useless. It will not be denied by the impartial, that in these and similar cases, the previous opinions with which the Scriptures are read, have a great influence in producing that confidence which many have, that Scripture is wholly on their side. The most thorough-going partisans are often persons who look almost wholly at those parts of Scripture that appear to favour their own opinions, and give little attention to those that are in favour of the other side.

Now that there is very generally a predisposition to think slavery not wrong, and to rest for its justification on those passages of Scripture which make mention of it, is what we, from the state of things in which we are placed, might expect. Slavery is of long standing among us. It has prevailed more or less in all parts of our country; most of our fathers, including many of the best men in the community, have practised it.

Mention is made in the Bible of servants: Abraham had servants, the Israelites had servants, and the New Testament speaks of servants, and commands them to be obedient to their masters; and without looking farther, or examining what is said on the other side, many, and I believe the generality of slave-holders, take it for granted that it is not wrong. Here is education, parental example, general custom, personal interest, love of ease and absolute authority—all on one side; and under their influence we might expect that those Scriptures would be found which appeared to justify slavery, and that these alone would be quoted. This in fact is found to be the case; and those portions on which its morality really depends, are almost entirely overlooked.\*

\* I have known professors of religion express great surprise, on having such passages as Ex. xxi. 26, Deut. xxiii. 15, Jer. xxxiv.



Perhaps nine-tenths of those who have at all referred to Scripture on this matter, have felt satisfied that there was nothing wrong in slavery, on finding that Abraham had servants, that the Israelites had servants, and that servants are mentioned in the New Testament. Now for these cases to prove that slavery as practised among us, is not wrong, the following things ought to be certain:—1. That those servants were slaves. 2. That those who held them have the approbation of Scripture for so doing. 3. That their example really justifies us in the slavery we practise. I am greatly mistaken, however, if all of these can be made to appear.

That servants are mentioned in Scripture, we readily admit. But we all know that there are various kinds of servants. There are hired servants, and bound servants, and bought servants, who are to serve for a few years; as well as slaves who are made to serve for life. The English convicts and the redemptioners, formerly brought to this country, were sold for a time. Persons may now be sold for servants under the vagrant law.

The words mostly used to designate servants,\* in the Scripture, express all kinds of servants. They include slaves, when there are any, as one condition of servants; but also include the hireling, bound, and bought for a limited time. The question is not about the morality of servitude generally; the morality of having hired, or bound, or even servants bought for a limited period; none question this. The question is about the morality of slavery; the holding them forcibly in perpetual bondage, with their children. Now to say Abraham and the Israelites had servants, and the New Testament speaks of servants, without *showing that they were slaves*, does not prove the moral right of slavery. We will have occasion to show hereafter that in most if not all the cases noticed in Scripture, even where there was a kind of slavery, it was very different from that practised among us.

8—22, quoted to them. They had never noticed them. And I may add that I have known preachers, after conversing and referring to Scripture, confess that they thought there were many more and plainer passages of Scripture in favour of slavery, than they could, on trial, find.

\* See Letter XIII.



But the second point is not more clear than the first—whether in case the patriarchs did practise slavery, they were right in so doing. It is one thing for Scripture to state what they did, and another thing to approve of it. The Scripture mentions the drunkenness of Noah—the incest of Lot—the concubinage of Abraham—the polygamy of Jacob—the murder and adultery of David, with many such things ; but we do not therefore infer that these things were morally right. The Scripture relates facts both bad and good, on the same general principle that all faithful history does ; but it furnishes us, in the law and moral precepts, with ample means of judging of their moral character. Now to take it for granted that slavery is not wrong, because we find that the patriarchs and others may possibly have practised it, is wholly inadmissible. To ascertain whether it was right or wrong, we ought to try it by the moral law, and the precepts that point out the duties of man towards man.

But the third thing may well be objected to. It does not follow that *we* may without sin do everything that may, perhaps, without much sin, have been done by persons in ancient times. We have much more light than they had. We have the Bible containing the written law—many lived before that book was written. The relation we sustain to each other, and the duties thence arising, are made, perhaps, a hundred fold more plain to us than they were to them. They may, through ignorance, have done things, without much sin, which if we do, with this book in our hands, will exclude us from the kingdom of God.

The Apostles declared in their day, that the “past times of ignorance God winked at, but then commanded all men everywhere to repent.” The increase of doctrinal light respecting salvation through Christ, we know was very gradual. The same appears to have been the case as to moral light and duty.

There were many things practised in ancient times, and by pious men, which if practised by professors of religion now, we would think wholly inconsistent with real religion. Polygamy, concubinage and divorce were very common in the church. The sacking of cities, and the butchery of prisoners are mentioned as things of common occur-

rence. It was common, in war, to kill all the males, and frequently even the females were destroyed. It does not follow that these things are right, and may be done now, although performed by Moses, and Joshua, and David, and many other great and good men.

The morality of slavery must be judged of by comparing it with the moral law, that eternal and immutable rule of right and wrong; and this law appears to me most clearly to condemn it. We have our duty to our fellow men summed up in love to them—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Our Lord himself gives us a practical view of this in the following words: "In all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Now to me few things are more plain than that slavery is inconsistent with this rule—is at war with its spirit, and irreconcilable with it. Let a person but form a correct idea of what slavery is. It is an involuntary and forced condition. It is claiming persons as property, holding them forcibly in bondage, and compelling them to serve without wages, retaining them and their children in that condition, and all for no crime. If this be consistent with loving them as ourselves—if it be in the spirit of doing as we would be done by, then I am altogether mistaken.

To attempt to evade the force of this plain rule, by supposing an extreme case—such as a criminal desiring us to favour his escape from merited punishment, is wholly unfair; and the man who reveres God's law ought never to do it. It is on all hands admitted that by crime, we may forfeit all our rights, and free others from the obligation of regarding them. A man may forfeit his liberty, and even his life, by personal crimes; and make it no breach of the law of love in those who deprive him of either. The case of slavery is wholly different. No personal crimes have changed the relations of the slave to his fellow men, and forfeited that love and kindness from them which our natures oblige us to desire for ourselves, and the law of God commands us to have to each other.

The rule is one of the plainest that can be named. Every man carries it in his own bosom. Self-love is common to all men—is a part of our nature—is in constant

operation—and no man can for a moment doubt whether slavery does not appear to him a great evil, and liberty, and the right of pursuing his own happiness, a great and most desirable good.

No rule that could be given man is of so easy and general an application. There are few if any cases in life, in which the rule cannot in a moment be applied; and that with an immediate decision as to what we ought to do. We need but make the case our own, and in the fear of that God who knows our hearts, and has made our self-love the measure of our duty to our fellow men, ask what we would have others do to us; and were we to admit that there are cases in which we might be at a loss to decide what self-love would choose or refuse, *yet, most clearly, slavery is not one of that kind.* Next to life itself and the necessary means of its subsistence, there is, perhaps, nothing in existence that men more universally desire than freedom. In a case where self-love in all mankind is so distinct in its likings and dislikings, and so importunate in its demands, it is disingenuous to attempt to evade it, and perplex the question by supposing cases of doubtful character.

I am aware that some explain the above law as relating to the *conduct* of man to man, *in* the relations they may sustain to each other; but suppose it must not be applied to the relations themselves. Where the relations are really natural and lawful, I admit that the remark holds good, but not otherwise. Suppose that a relation is really wrong—that it involves manifest injustice and injury to one party for the benefit of the other, would not the law of love forbid it? Most assuredly it would. What other law is there than the moral law to forbid immoral and unjust relations? The law of love is the substance of the whole moral law, and forbids all that is contrary to it.

That the relation of master and servant, generally considered, has nothing wrong in it—and when filled with the consent and for the mutual benefit of both parties, has the approbation of the law, I fully admit. This, however, is manifestly not the case with slavery. Slavery is the *unnatural* and *unlawful condition* of servitude; and like the unlawful condition of any other lawful thing, marriage or

government, for instance, is a violation of the law of love, and therefore sinful.

We have in Scripture various views of the law of love and its actings towards ourselves and others. The importance of the point we are discussing, will justify us in specifying several of these, and noticing their disagreement with slavery.

“Love seeketh not her own.” Self-love seeks our own. But we are to love others as we love ourselves. Self-love is to be the measure of our love to others. The love, then, which the law requires us to have to others must lead us to promote their welfare, as self-love leads us to seek our own.

Now slavery is irreconcilable with this requirement of the law. To hold another forcibly in bondage, and compel him, without reward, to minister to our ease or comfort, is a self-seeking, at the expense of others. The slave-holder may more or less regard the comfort of those whom he holds in bondage; but if he regarded their interests and happiness as he does his own, and that is what the law requires, would he forcibly prevent them from seeking their own happiness, in the way that might to them appear best? It is undeniable that the supposed ease or comfort or profit of the slave-holder, and that more or less at the expense of the slave, is the usual object of the slave-holder. The extent to which these may be sought at the expense of the slave may be greater or less, and of course greater or less injustice may attend it; that, however, is incidental to it, and not the point directly before us. The *principle* of slavery, the compelling others to minister to our ease or profit at the expense of their own, is a *self-seeking*, which, in its spirit, is contrary to that love that “seeketh not her own.”

It is said that “love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”

With this view of the law of love, slavery, as appears to me, is clearly inconsistent. To be claimed as property, to be held forcibly in bondage, and compelled to serve without wages, is felt by all to be one of the greatest ills men can suffer. All men so view it in their own case. So universally has slavery been considered as an ill, as hard

dealing of man to man, that reasons have ever been thought needful to justify it. Persons have been reduced to slavery for real or supposed crimes—enemies and prisoners have been reduced to slavery, on the supposition that such persons might lawfully be treated in that way.

Now it is no less an ill to be born in slavery, held because the parent was a slave, than to be reduced to it: and considered as treatment at the hand of their fellow men, it may be worse. The man reduced to slavery may in part have deserved it, but this cannot be said of his children. Bondage for life is so great an ill, that few crimes are thought to deserve it. It is in some respects worse than death. Now to inflict this ill on the unoffending children of those who have during life been ministering to the profit and comfort of their owners, is surely hard dealing. The spirit of the law forbids rendering evil for evil; but here is worse, here is rendering evil for good.

The law requiring us to do to others as we would have them do to us, does fairly forbid us doing to them what we would not have them do to us.

Now, of all things, we would oppose being reduced to slavery. We would consider it the greatest evil men could do to us. We are then bound by the plain spirit of the precept, not to do to others what we would think so hard if done to ourselves. We are to make our own views and feelings respecting rights, the measure of our doings towards others. If we knew not the worth of personal rights, if we cared nothing about them, the rule would have less application. But we know them, and highly prize them, and of course are under peculiar obligation to respect them in others.

The rule of doing as we would be done by, is so plain that all understand it; and so agrees with the natural judgments of the mind and dictates of conscience, that all men feel its propriety. And although they may violate it themselves, yet they are almost sure to see and condemn its violation in others. On this ground it is that the continuance of slavery among us, notwithstanding the principles we avowed, and the part we acted when our own rights were endangered, is so generally condemned among

the nations of Europe. And while the natural judgments of the mind remain the same, we will be censured for our inconsistency.

Before leaving this branch of the subject, allow me to quote a few more passages which give similar views of the law of love, as the rule of moral conduct.—“The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and gave himself for us.”

Many passages relate more directly to the *conduct* enjoined on us towards our fellow men.

“To do good and communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Let us, as we have opportunity, do good to all men. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself. Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Look not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful for the body, what doth it profit? But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”

These passages, to which thousands might be added, are but various unfoldings of the law of love, as the rule of duty towards our fellow men. Their whole tendency appears to me to be opposed to involuntary servitude. All men consider freedom as a good, and slavery as an evil. The whole tenor of those precepts is to enjoin doing good, and not evil, to our fellow men. We are to do good to all. The good which the slave especially wants, is to be restored to freedom, to his natural rights. We are to look on the things of others, and to bear their



burdens. It implies looking on the hard condition of the slave, and removing his burdens.

It ought to be remarked that the rule of moral duty given in God's word, requires us to carry our love and kindness so far as to render good for evil, love for hatred, and blessing for cursing.

"I say unto you that hear, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other: and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Bless them that persecute you; bless and curse not. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

We are taught in these and similar passages, that it is our duty to bear patiently the evils which we may meet with at the hands of our fellow men, and in return to do to them only good. We are to do good to all, as well the bad as the good; we are to love all our enemies as well as friends, and thus follow the example of God, "who is kind to the unthankful and evil," and of Christ, who, when he suffered, "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

I see not how the spirit and tenor of these precepts can agree with slavery, that hard dealing of man towards man.

I may here briefly remark that this last class of texts furnish a consistent and satisfactory explanation of those passages which enjoin it on servants to obey their masters. Some have strongly inferred from these passages that slavery was not wrong. It shows how ready people are to grasp at anything that in appearance may justify what they wish to practise. Those passages relate to the duty of servants, and not to that of the master, and of course are not the passages from which the duty of the master is to be learned. The class of Scriptures last quoted, proves that duties are enjoined which yet none of our fellow men have a right to exact of us. It is our duty to render good for evil. Our fellow men, however, have no right to exact it of us. We are commanded to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us; but said persecutors have no just claim on us so to do. If we are

smitten on the one cheek, we are to turn the other; and we are not to withhold our coat from him that has taken our cloak; but God's command to us, neither justifies the smiter or the robber, or in the least lessens his guilt in what he does. As a branch of the general duty of meekness and patience, and rendering good for evil, servants are commanded to bear patiently the hardships of their lot, and to obey their masters, even the froward and injurious; but it does not follow that the master's claim is just, or that his whole conduct to the servant may not be a violation of the law of love. I before observed that the word rendered servant in those places, is to be taken in its general sense, so as to include all conditions of servants. Of course it is the general condition that is properly referred to; and it has nothing to do with *justifying slavery*, the *unlawful* condition of servitude. To this I must add the fact which will appear hereafter, that that condition of servitude called slavery, is repeatedly called *oppression*, *heavy burdens*, *yoke*, *cruel* and *hard bondage*. These terms imply that it is wrong. An oppressor evidently is an evil-doer. God has expressed his hatred of oppression, and declared he will break the rod of the oppressor, and be the refuge of the oppressed.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER VII.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

IN my last letter I proved that the law of love, and the rule of doing as we would be done by, do condemn slavery. Various attempts, however, have been made so to explain, or limit, or qualify these rules, as to make them permit slavery. A full account of these explanations would form a curious article. This I will not attempt, but select several of the most imposing.

Some allege that Scripture does, both by precept and example, permit slavery; and that therefore the law of love and rule of doing as we would be done by, must be so explained as to agree with said permission, and not set it aside. They argue, that had it been morally wrong, Scripture would not have permitted it; and the moral law being immutably the same, what it did not condemn as morally wrong formerly, cannot be wrong now. Others, considering the argument from the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations as not applicable to the state of things in which we are placed, lay but little stress on it; but think they find in the notices of servitude in the New Testament, and in the relations which the church now sustains to civil government, such a limitation of the law of love, and the rule of doing as we would be done by, as lets slavery alone. These two plans embrace most that can be said in justification of slavery as a moral question.

That the Scriptures are consistent with themselves, I not only admit, but maintain; and my main reasons for believing slavery morally wrong, is found in its opposition to the very spirit of the moral law; that the law of love and rule of doing as we would be done by, do, in their plain, straight-forward, and common sense meaning, condemn slavery, is to me one of the plainest cases that can be named. Now, if there be another class of Scripture passages that justify it, certainly a difficulty is presented of a very serious nature. It ought not to be taken for granted, nor even admitted, until those passages are carefully examined, together with all the other passages that may throw light on the case, and the fact be ascertained. We ought

to treat the case just as we treat other cases, when Scripture appears, or is alleged, to contradict Scripture, and I doubt not it will appear that those passages admit of explanations consistent with the moral law.

It ought to be recollected, that while the moral law is the same as a rule of duty, the extent to which its principles have been unfolded and carried out, is much greater under the New Testament than under the Old Testament. This holds good of many parts of religious truth. The ancient saints were saved through Christ; yet they had much less light as to his character and salvation than we enjoy. In doctrine, we explain the dark passages of the Old, by the more luminous passages of the New Testament. We ought to do so in morals, and it would not be more absurd to leave the doctrinal light of the New Testament, and regulate our faith by the Old Testament, than to do so in morals. Had the patriarchs enjoyed the moral light we do, they would not have practised polygamy and divorce, nor do I suppose they would have practised slavery. It may, indeed, on good grounds, be doubted, as will appear hereafter, whether the patriarchs and pious Jews did practise slavery, properly so called. The Jewish law most certainly contained various limitations and offsets against absolute slavery.

That the Old Testament, when fairly construed, does really condemn slavery, and did design to prevent it, will appear manifest, I think, from the following considerations. Moral duty was enjoined on the Jews, as of much higher obligation than ceremonial.

“The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords. A great God, a mighty and a terrible; which regardeth not persons nor taketh reward. He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widows, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt not oppress the stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. If a stranger sojourn with you in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you, shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself: for ye were strangers in the

land of Egypt. Bring no more vain oblations. Incense is an abomination unto me; your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil; learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Go and learn what that meaneth," said our Lord, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." And in the following passage the Jews are charged with inverting the proper order of things, and neglecting the most important. "Ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."\*

Here we have the law of love not only brought forward in many forms, but laid down in the same words used in the New Testament. It was to be their rule of duty towards the stranger, as well as towards their own people. Its observance was enforced on them again and again, by referring to their former slavery in Egypt; their affliction and sorrow of heart while forcibly held in that condition. "Ye know the heart of a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Ye were Pharaoh's bond-men, and the Lord delivered you, therefore I command you this thing." *Deut. xv. 15.*

If this be not substantially an application of the law of love, and the rule of doing as they would be done by, to the case of slavery, then I know not what it is.

The sins most frequently condemned in Scripture, the crimes for which Israel was most frequently punished, the conduct against which God declares himself most opposed, and about which most is said, are violations of the moral law, and a large portion of them is conduct of man towards man. He must have read the Scripture to little purpose, who has not observed this. Thousands of passages could be adduced in proof of it. The following is a sample:—

"The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bon-

\* *Deut. x. Ex. xxii. 23. Isaiah i. Mat. xxiii. 23.*

dage; and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage. I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them, and have come down to deliver them. So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and I beheld the tears of the oppressed, and they had no comforter: and on the side of the oppressor there was power, but they had no comforter.—If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for He that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.—If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right; hath not oppressed any; hath spoiled none by violence; hath executed true judgment between man and man; he shall surely live. If he beget a son that is a robber; that hath oppressed the poor and needy; hath spoiled by violence: he shall surely die. So if he beget a son that seeth his father's sins, and doeth not such like; neither hath oppressed any; neither hath spoiled by violence; hath taken off his hand from the poor: he shall live.—Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.”\*

These passages, to which hundreds could be added, condemn all oppression. In a number of them slavery is directly referred to. The slavery of Israel is expressly called oppression, affliction, burdens, yoke, bondage, &c. and in Isaiah (lviii. 6) God expressly states the duty of letting slaves go out free, in opposition to holding them in bondage, which is called oppression, heavy burdens, yoke, &c.

Now I feel authorized to say that it will require very plain and explicit passages to prove that slavery was not considered as morally wrong, when the whole force of the above and similar passages prove that it was.

It will not be enough to find passages that mention slavery: passages can be found that mention many sinful practices. It must be shown that the practice *was approved*. It is not sufficient to adduce passages that speak

\* Ex. ii. 23, iii. 9. Eccles. iv. 1, v. 8. Ezekiel xviii. 5—17. Isaiah lviii. 6.



of good men as having servants. It must be shown that they held them in slavery, and are approved for so doing. It is past dispute, that immoral things are mentioned in Scripture of many good men. The drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the concubinage and polygamy of Abraham and Jacob, &c. are examples. These things were not the less sinful because done by good men. They are related as facts; we are left to judge of their right or wrong by the moral law, and those many portions of Scripture that relate to moral conduct.

Let us now notice the various kinds of servitude spoken of in Scripture, and the limitations and checks which prevented slavery, properly so called.

For some kinds of crime, persons were reduced to servitude.

“If a man steal a sheep or an ox, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. If he have nothing to pay, he shall be sold for his theft.”

Servitude might originate from poverty.

“If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-man, but as a hired servant. If a man sell his daughter to be a handmaid.”

Or from prisoners taken in war.

“When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. If it make thee answer of peace, all the people therein shall be tributaries unto thee; if it will make no peace, thou shalt smite every male, but the women and little ones shalt thou take unto thyself.”

Or by purchase from the heathen.

“Thy bond-men and thy bond-maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about thee. Of them shalt thou buy bond-men and bond-maids; ye shall take them, as an inheritance, for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession, and they shall be your bond-men for ever.”\*

Some would add, those born in the house of maid-servants, and quote *Ex.* xxi. 4—11. I doubt whether that

\* *Ex.* xxi. 7. *Deut.* xxii. 1. *Deut.* xx. 14. *Lev.* xxv. 44.

passage, or any other, proves that point. It bears, I think, a consistent interpretation which gives no support to that opinion. It will, however, be noticed in its place.

The above passages speak of a kind of servitude. The following laws were designed to limit it, or open a door of freedom to those in bondage.

“He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” *Ex.* xxi. 16.

This passage made it death to steal a person and sell him, or be found in possession of one thus deprived of freedom. Stealing has ever been a fruitful source of slavery. It is on good authority believed, that one-half of the negroes brought from Africa were stolen.

“If a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go out free for his eye’s sake. If he smite out his man-servant’s tooth or his maid-servant’s tooth, he shall let him go out free for his tooth’s sake.” *Ex.* xxii. 26.

This law gave protection against severe and cruel usage. If it did not always prevent it, it made amends for it by restoring to freedom.

“Thou shalt not deliver to his master the servant that is escaped from his master to thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among thee, in the place that he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it pleaseth him best; thou shalt not oppress him.” *Deut.* xxiii. 15.

This forbids them to force back to bondage those that fled from it. It recognized the principle that every man has a better right to liberty, unless forfeited by crime, than another can have to withhold it from him, and it forbid their giving aid to deprive a fellow creature of that right. It evidently appealed to their own case.

They had been in slavery—felt its evils, and fled from it. An attempt was made to force them back to bondage. God by a miracle delivered them, and smote the oppressor, and commands them to give no aid in preventing the escape of others from a situation which had been so galling to themselves.

This law may mainly have had in view the servants that fled to them from neighbouring states. It prevented them

from restoring such, and from entering into any mutual engagement for that purpose, and of course it must be expected that neighbouring states would adopt a similar practice towards them; and when we consider how small the land of Canaan was, and how surrounded with other tribes, it must be seen that this law tended to prevent slavery. A place could hardly be found in Canaan, from which a slave could not, in a night and a day, reach some heathen tribe; and, when there, he would, from the natural operation of this law, be safe.

I see not, however, that we have any authority to confine its operation to slaves of heathen masters. The law itself makes no such distinction; and as to the matter of fact, a Moabite, or an Amorite, or a Philistine might have as good a right to his slave as an Israelite could have to his. He may have taken him in war, or bought, or raised him. It is, however, undeniable that, in their case, the law forbid restoring the servant, and fairly implied the duty of protecting him. There was therefore nothing morally wrong in the case, nor would there be in applying the rule to the slaves of their brethren. Let any one compare this law with the following article in the Constitution of the United States, relating to fugitive slaves.

“No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.”

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in the place which he shall choose in one of thy gates where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him.”

These two laws are the opposite of each other. The one is in favour of liberty, and the other of slavery. The law of Moses was binding on all the tribes and people of Israel.

The Jewish government, as organized under Moses, was a confederacy. Each tribe had its distinct organization and its reserved powers. In their associated capacity, they formed a general government, for general and specific

purposes. There is a striking resemblance between them and our own confederacy, leaving out the theocratic part.

Now had the above law of Moses been inserted in the Constitution of the United States, instead of the one placed there, it would have done much to do away slavery. It would have liberated thousands. It would have put an end to the system. It was designed and did operate thus in Israel.

“Thou shalt hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof.” *Levit.* xxv. 10.

Here we have a law that expressly gave liberty to all every fifty years.

“If thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go out free from thee : and thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock and out of thy floor and out of thy wine-press—and thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee, therefore I command thee this thing to-day.” *Deut.* xv. 12.

This law, giving freedom to the Hebrew servant at the end of six years, did in fact apply to all that the law allowed them to retain among them, as the following things go to prove :—

It was a part of the covenant of circumcision which the Jews considered as peculiarly binding, that all their servants were to be circumcised. “He that is born in the house and he that is bought with money of any stranger, must needs be circumcised—the uncircumcised shall be cut off.” *Gen.* xvii. 12—14.

This expressly embraced all those born at home, and those obtained from abroad.

The consequence of an adult servant refusing to be circumcised, and become a member of the congregation of the Lord, is stated; and shows that he acted freely in the case—“*the uncircumcised shall be cut off*”<sup>\*</sup>—separated, become an alien to said community.

\* נכר (Neker) the word rendered cut off, is the same that is just above rendered stranger; and it plainly means that those bought

By the covenant of which circumcision was the token, Israel formed a religious community, and stood engaged to keep all God's commandments. It was to them in this character, that the land of Canaan was given, many special promises made, and laws and precepts enjoined. Those who refused the token of God's covenant, and declined engaging to keep all God's commands, were to be separated from that people. The law of circumcision operated as a limitation law. Israel were neither to intermarry with the uncircumcised, nor were they to have them as servants, to endanger their morals and religion.

This construction of the law respecting circumcision, to which a fair examination of all the laws bearing on the case leads, is confirmed by the declaration of Maimonides, one of the most distinguished of the Jewish Rabbis.

“Whether a servant be born in the house of an Israelite, or whether he be purchased from a heathen, the master must bring them both into the covenant. But he that is born in the house, is to be entered on the eighth day, and he that is bought with money, on the day he receiveth him, unless he be unwilling. For if the master receive a grown slave, and he be unwilling, his master is to bear with him, to seek to win him by instruction, and by love and kindness for one year. After which, should he refuse, it is forbidden to keep him longer than twelve months: and his master must send him back to the stranger from whom he came: for the God of Jacob will not accept any other than the worship of a willing heart.” Quoted from Stroud.

Moses, in giving the laws of the Passover, refers to this law as in existence, and to be observed. “Every man servant that is bought with money when thou hast circumcised him, then he shall eat thereof: a foreigner or a hired servant shall not eat thereof. For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.” *Ex. xii. 44.*

The obligation here to circumcise the bought servant, and cause him to eat the Passover, which is not named respecting the foreigner and hired servant, agrees with the above explanation of the law. They were not forbidden

of other people, should be united to Israel by being circumcised; and that any neglecting or refusing to be circumcised, should be strangers to this community—separated from it.

to employ a foreigner or a hireling, or entertain him as a sojourner: such cases would usually be but for a short time; but if they bought and introduced into their families, strangers, they must limit themselves to those, who would renounce idolatry and embrace the true religion. The case agrees perfectly with the laws, regulations and changes, having in view to prevent them from mingling and forming alliances with idolaters. Had they been allowed to have among them a body of servants who professed not the true religion, it could not have failed to endanger their morals and religion. Absolute slavery never fails to corrupt the morals of a people.

Now, the consequence of their servant's professing the true religion, and being circumcised, was that they became as those born in the land—as the Israelites themselves. This is plainly and repeatedly stated. “One law and one custom and one manner shall be to the home-born and to the stranger: as ye are so shall the stranger be before the Lord.”\*

This law, by its plain straight-forward operation, placed the heathen servant, when circumcised, on equal footing with the Hebrew servant: and of course he would go out free, by the limitation law, and could not be held to serve more than six years.

This would be the most natural meaning of these laws, were nothing else said that bore on the case. They are precisely on the principle of the laws of naturalization generally. Certain rights and privileges are secured to the native members of society: and on prescribed conditions, strangers are admitted to participate with them in said privileges. And when we recollect that the connection between church and state among the Jews, was distinguished by this peculiarity, that their civil privileges were made to depend on their religious—that the land of Canaan itself, and all their temporal blessings were given to them as God's visible church, and their continuance made to depend on their keeping his commandments; we need not be surprised that the rite of circumcision, while its first object was to be a token of God's covenant, should

\* Ex. xii. 48. Num. ix. 14—xv. 15.



carry with it the right of civil liberty. "To me," says God, "the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants whom I have brought forth out of Egypt, they shall not be sold for bond-men."

Whether the word Hebrew used in the law, be used in the national or ecclesiastical sense, does not alter the case. The consequence of being circumcised and joined to the Lord, placed the stranger on the same footing with their own people. There was to be one law, and one custom, and one manner to the home-born and the circumcised stranger.

Paul, who was of the Jewish race, was still a Roman citizen, and claimed all their privileges. Foreigners who become naturalized in this country, are called Americans, and recognized in law as American citizens.

The term Hebrew was that by which Israel was usually designated, at the time they came out of Egypt, when the law limiting service to six years was given. It was there often, if not usually, used in the ecclesiastical sense, to designate that people as the covenant people of God. The covenant was made with the nation; the nation was the church; and in its relation to God as his visible people, was the covenant of Sinai made, of which the limiting law is a part. That covenant must have been made with all who were circumcised; of course it embraced the bought servant, and while the law of circumcision placed him on equal footing with native-born members, the limiting law gave him as well as them liberty in six years.

The case then stands thus:—Israel had been reduced to slavery, and for many years held forcibly in that condition, and compelled to serve without wages. God heard their groans, and delivered them. In giving his law to the same people soon afterwards, God reminded them again and again of their bondage, and charged them not to deal thus with others. For certain crimes, however, and in some cases for debt, persons might be sold and held to service; but none were to be made to serve more than six years.

Severe or cruel usage gave liberty at any time. The stealing of a person or holding such in bondage, was punished with death. Those taken in war might be held in

bondage; this, in the then usages of war, would prevent much bloodshed, and they were allowed to buy of the nations about them; but in both of these cases, they must confine themselves to those that would renounce idolatry, embrace the true religion, and receive circumcision—the token of the covenant; and when they did this, they were to be recognized as brethren, and the law gave them freedom in six years.\*

\* Of much additional matter which goes to prove that the limitation law applied to all servants, the following is selected.

1. It may be argued from the meaning of the word Hebrew. It is not the name of a patriarch, and used to designate his descendants, but a word expressing a character or condition of persons. It means pilgrim, passage, &c., and was first applied to Abram, after he was living as a pilgrim and stranger in Canaan. Gen. xiv. It came to designate the holy family who lived as pilgrims in Canaan. Gen. xxxix. They lived thus by faith, confessed they were pilgrims, and for this cause God was “not ashamed to be called their God.” Heb. xi. Those associated with them by circumcision, were equally strangers and pilgrims.

2. God often calls himself the God of the Hebrews, in his messages to Pharaoh. Not, however, in the sense of creation; he is in that sense equally the God of all people. Nor as to their personal holiness and salvation. Israel at that time gave little proof of piety. But they were God’s visible covenant people. The circumcised stranger was, however, as much in covenant with God, as any of them. Now the law limiting the service of the Hebrew servants to six years, was a part of the covenant, and embraced all whom that covenant embraced: of course it embraced the circumcised stranger.

3. It is a fact that strangers were incorporated with Israel. Jephennah the father of Caleb, was a Kennezeit, yet Caleb was a prince of Judah. Gen. xv. 19. Joshua xiv. 6—14. The Kenite, the relation of Moses, joined the tribe of Judah and is counted in their genealogies. Judges i. 16. 1 Chron. ii. 55. Rahab joined the tribe of Judah, with her father’s house, and was married to the prince of that tribe. Joshua vi. 25. Mat i. 5.

Ruth the Moabitess held the property of her husband and husband’s brother, and was married by Boaz according to the requirements of the Levitic law. Ruth i. xvi. iv. 10—13.

Obededom the Gittite was joined to the tribe of Levi, and became porter. 1 Chron. xiii. 13, 14. xxvi. 4—5. These are but a few of the many cases on record.

4. I know not that we can account for the great increase of Israel during their stay of 215 years in Egypt, but by admitting that others were joined with them. At the birth of Moses, and

Servitude, thus limited, was stripped of all that deserves the name of slavery. With respect to their own people, it was chiefly as a punishment for crime; and with respect to the heathen, it opened a door for their coming to the knowledge of the true religion, and being joined to the people of God, and then their chains fell from off their hands, and they went out free. It did not reach their children.

Yours, &c.

possibly for some time after, the male children were destroyed. There were, however, 600,000 men able for war. If these men were one-sixth, their whole number was above three millions and a half. This would have required them to double in fourteen years. But they took down servants with them into Egypt. They had just before destroyed Shechem, and took the women and children captives. Gen. 34. If they kept them, as it is intimated they did, they must have embraced the true religion and been united to them.

5. The reason of the law forbidding God's people to be held in bondage is, that they are God's servants: "For to me the children of Israel are servants; they are my servants, therefore they shall not be sold for bond-men." This reason, however, was as applicable to the circumcised stranger as to their own people.

6. The names Hebrew, Israel, Jew, circumcised, &c. are both in the Old and New Testament applied to all God's visible people. "Many people of the land became Jews. He is not a Jew that is one outwardly." Esther viii. 17. Romans ii. 28.

7. The prophet Ezekiel in foretelling the restoration of Israel, declares (xlvii. 22) that "the stranger shall receive an inheritance in the tribe to which he is joined, and be as those born in the land."

This we may infer from Exodus xii. 48. was from the first intended. Caleb the Kennezeite was an example. It is, however, here specially directed by the prophet.

## LETTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

THE principal difficulty that lies against the above interpretation of the Mosaic law respecting slavery arises from what is said in Leviticus xxv. 44. "Thy bond-men and thy bond-maids shall be of the heathen; of them thou shalt buy, and shall leave them as an inheritance to your children, and they shall be your bond-men for ever."

This passage, I readily admit, does at first view look like a permission to practise slavery, and that for life. And were it the only passage in the Mosaic law that related to slavery, we would very naturally be led to take it in that sense. There are, however, many other passages that relate to it, and when we compare it with those formerly quoted, which I must request you to do, it will at once appear, that if taken to justify unqualified slavery, it will be at variance both with their letter and spirit.

It is undeniable, that many of those quoted above speak of the slavery of Israel themselves; that they call it oppression, affliction, burdens, cruel and hard bondage, and in direct reference to it, Israel is charged, again and again, not to deal so with others—no, not with the stranger: "ye shall not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. If thou afflict them, and they cry at all unto me, I will hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword."

This simple statement of the case makes it our duty, if we believe Scripture to be consistent with itself, to examine whether an explanation may not be given to Leviticus xxv. 44, which will be consistent with God's judgments on the Egyptians for enslaving Israel, with the many warnings given Israel against dealing with others as the Egyptians dealt with them, and with the guards against slavery in the limitation laws above quoted.

However plainly it may at first view appear to permit slavery, a little examination of the nature of the case, and comparison of it with other passages, may satisfy us that there are various explanations of it, and on principles on

which generally admitted explanations of other difficult passages are made, that will perfectly reconcile it with those many passages that condemn slavery. Several of these explanations I will notice.

1. This passage immediately follows the command to treat their brother, who might be sold unto them, not as a bond-servant but as a hired one ; that is, as I understand it, not only to treat him as an equal and brother, but retain him no longer than his debt was paid ; reckoning with him as a hireling and allowing him wages as such.

A rule somewhat less lenient was permitted in the case of those bought of the heathen. This is plain. But what was the nature of the servitude in which those bought of the heathen should be held, and especially its duration, is not certain from this passage. It does not follow from the use of the word עולם (olem), rendered for ever, that it might be perpetual ; yea it does not follow that it might be to the next jubilee. For it will be admitted that this word stands for various durations ; some longer or shorter according to the nature of the subject to which it refers. In the case of the servant whose ear was bored, which law we have in two places, it is said both times that he should serve עולם (olem) for ever. *Ex.* xxi. 6. *Deut.* xv. 16. It is, however, generally admitted, that said servant might go out at the jubilee : and usually believed, that he could not be transferred, nor held to serve by any but the master who bored his ear.

This word, although it immediately follows bond-servant, does not necessarily relate to the length of service of any individual, but may refer to the whole rule. Part of the rule relates to their brother, when sold unto them ; part to their buying a stranger ; and part to the redemption of their brother, when sold to a stranger. It may relate to the whole law as their standing rule respecting slavery.

We have several passages, in which it, or words expressing duration, are used in this sense.

God said to Abraham, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Stephen referring to the same case says, "They should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years." *Gen.* xv. *Acts* vii. The four hundred years, in both these passages,

immediately follows the bondage and appears to fix its duration. And were it not that other passages are at variance with it, and prove that Israel was in Egypt only about two hundred and fifteen years, it would be so taken. It is, however, generally admitted that the four hundred years relate not only to the term of bondage, as at first they seem to do, but to the whole time from the annunciation of the event, to the coming out of Egypt.

The law forbidding a Moabite or Ammonite to enter the congregation of the Lord "until the fourth generation for ever," is another case in which a rule is qualified by the word signifying duration. *Deut. xxiii.*

If the above be not satisfactory, it may be explained on another principle. It will not be denied, that Israel was permitted to do some things which it would be wrong in us to do.

They were permitted, yea, directed, to borrow or demand so much gold and silver and raiment, as to spoil the Egyptians. It was not returned, and the intention evidently was, not to return it. This would not justify us in borrowing and retaining our neighbour's goods.

Israel was commanded to dispossess and utterly destroy the Canaanites, and seize on their country and all that they possessed. This would not justify us in treating others in the same way.

These were special commands or permissions, and do not justify similar conduct in any other individuals.

If we then suppose the passage in question a special permission to Israel to hold slaves, it would not justify the general principle of slavery. The Pope used to give away Pagan countries to Christian princes; and possibly he inferred his right to do so from Israel's dispossessing the Canaanites. His absurdity was not much greater than is the absurdity of justifying slavery from this precept of the Jewish law.

There is, however, a third explanation, possibly more satisfactory than any yet offered.

It is past dispute, that there are some precepts in the Mosaic code, which suppose that things morally wrong did or would exist; and instead of directly prohibiting them,



(which in fact the moral law had done) regulates them, so as to lessen the evil. I will adduce several cases.

It is supposed, that at some future time, the Israelites might be so influenced by the nations about them, as to wish to have a king over them.\* In reference to this supposed state of things, various rules are given respecting whom they should choose, and how the king should conduct himself. The case here supposed, took place above four hundred years after Moses; and any one may see, by reading the declaration of God respecting it, and the messages of Samuel to them, that they sinned “a *great sin* in asking a king.”†

The precept allowing a man to put away his wife, by giving her a bill of divorce, is of the same kind. This case was directly referred to our Lord, and he was asked why Moses permitted it if it were wrong?‡ He answered, that “for the hardness of their hearts” that precept was given, but that it was a violation of the original institution of marriage. Hardness of heart is itself always in Scripture represented as a sin, and one that leads to many others.§

The precept respecting humbling a female captive is of the same general nature. A case is supposed that was likely to take place in their wars—that of females exposed to violence. It was directed, that in those cases the female should be taken home by the man who had done it, and considered and treated as his wife. If they did not live happily together, he was allowed to divorce her as other wives were divorced. She was not, however, to be sold; but must be let go free. This case could seldom, if ever, take place without violating the seventh commandment. It was plainly, like the other case, permitted for the hardness of their hearts. These precepts are civil regulations for the directions of the judges, and had nothing to do with the relation of the action to the moral law. By the moral law, they were sinful, and must be accounted for to God. How far their ignorance, and the darkness of the

\* Deut. xvii.

† 1 Sam. viii. xii.

‡ Deut. xxiv. 1. Matt. xix. 3—10.

§ Deut. xxi. 10—14.

times, may have gone to lessen their guilt, we know not. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

These cases sufficiently establish the fact, that some things were tolerated as civil or political things, while they were morally wrong. The passage in question (*Lev. xxv. 44.*) may be explained on this principle. It does not now justify slavery morally considered—it did not among the Jews. It placed it on the same ground with divorce, polygamy, &c.

This explanation I think perfectly satisfactory. I am confident, indeed, that all three explanations are fully as good as are given to many other difficulties met with in the sacred volume.

For instance: God's law is often declared to be good, yet it is said, "God gave Israel statutes that were not good, and by which they could not live."\*

Paul declares that a man is justified by faith and not by works; James declares that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.† Our Lord declares that the Father is greater than him; yet, that he and the Father are one. It is said, No man hath seen God at any time; and yet the Old Testament relates many appearances of the Lord. It is declared, God created all things; yet it is said that all things were created by Christ.

It was promised that the kingdom of David should last for ever; yet it has long since come to an end.

Some things are said not to have come into God's mind; yet he is declared to know all things.

God declares that he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; but *Ezek. xviii.* appears plainly to deny it.

These, with hundreds of such passages, at first view appear to contradict each other; and many errors arise from explaining them on wrong principles. The intelligent men of all sects, who hold the truth of the Gospel, find consistent explanations of them, and on principles which *must* be admitted in explaining human language, *spoken* as well as *written*. When taken in the sense *meant*, they do not contradict EACH OTHER BUT FULLY AGREE.

\* *Ezek. xx. 25.*

† *Gal. ii. 21. James ii. 24.*

The following passage will perhaps be quoted as proving that servitude was perpetual, and that children of female servants were held as slaves.

“If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve thee: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she hath borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s, and he shall go out by himself.”  
*Ex. xxi. 3—4.*

“If a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. If she please not her master who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her to a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her: and if he hath betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. If he take him another wife, her food and raiment and duty of marriage shall he not diminish, and if he do not these three things unto her, then shall she go out free for nothing.”

At first view, we might think that these passages allowed holding female servants in bondage for life. We need, however, but turn to Deut. xv. 12. to find a law placing the female on the same footing with the male. “If an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.”

Some have supposed that the easiest way of removing the apparent contradiction in these two laws is, to consider the one in Deuteronomy, which was given about forty years after the other, as really repealing the first, and giving freedom to the female, which was not done before. In this case it would stand on the same footing with divorce. and the remarriage of the parties to others, that, although morally wrong, was for the hardness of their hearts, tolerated by the civil law under the Jewish dispensation, but not allowed in the New Testament. *Matt. v. 31, 32. xix. 2—10. 1 Cor. vii. 11.*

It appears to me, however, that the two laws are really not at variance; that they are reconcilable with each

other. They both relate to Hebrew servants, and their law did not indeed allow them to intermarry with any who did not embrace the true religion; and on doing so, all were to be considered as their own people. Now, in the case of the married man who was sold, his wife and children went out with him. Of the wife who was given to a servant while in bondage, it is said she was not to go out with him. It is not said, she was not to go out at all. The law in Deuteronomy, fifteenth chapter, shows that she was, after six years. Not, however, at the time her husband did, unless their time commenced together. The case may be thus stated. Suppose a man to buy a servant, who was to serve six years; after four of those years were past, he brings a female, who is also to serve six years, and allows them to marry. When the husband's time would be out, the wife would have four years to serve. The law did not give her liberty until her time was finished, as unmarried servants, not brothers and sisters, would seldom be bought together, the law required that their marriage should not alter their period of service; and as a question might arise, respecting the children, it decided that they should remain with the mother, as the most suitable person to have the care of children of that age.

The case of a daughter sold for a maid-servant, appears manifestly to relate not to females generally, the rule in Deut. xv. 12. shows that they were to go out free after six years; but to those who were at the same time, *betrothed* to be married to the master, or some of his family. It is not at variance with the general rule. We know from the case of Jacob, Othniel, David and others, that the Jews were in the habit of buying their wives; and it appears from this passage that they sometimes took them home and employed them as domestics before the consummation of the marriage. The period after they were betrothed until marriage, was possibly often thus spent. They were frequently betrothed several years before marriage. The Jews practise so now. They often betroth in childhood. The law provides that in case the marriage is not consummated, she must not be sold to another, but returned to her friends.

I will now notice briefly, the principal Scripture cases quoted at times as instances of slavery, and as justifying it.

The prophecy of Noah, "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." Not only is this passage quoted as referring to slavery, but what is more surprising, as justifying our holding the Africans in that condition. *Ex. iii. Deut. vii. Lev. xviii. Jos. xii.*

We need but compare the account of the settlement of the sons of Canaan in the land, from them called Canaan, in the tenth chapter of Genesis, with the promise of God often repeated to Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Israel, that he would give them that land; and the account of their subduing and taking possession of it under Joshua, to be satisfied that the prophecy refers to that case. Its application to the Canaanites is manifest, but to the Africans is exceedingly doubtful.

The passage, we are to recollect, is but a prophecy, and has nothing to do with the right or the wrong of the thing, in those who accomplished it. Many of the worst crimes ever committed by man have been foretold; but that did not make them right. The bondage of Israel under the Egyptians was foretold to Abraham: "Thy seed shall be in bondage, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." The apostasies of Israel, the death of Christ, the persecution of his followers, have all been foretold. They were not, however, the less sinful.

It must not be overlooked that the evils inflicted on the Canaanites, were inflicted at the express command of God. It was in way of punishment. Israel did not receive a general permission to deal thus with all people. The guilty nation was pointed out, and the nature of the punishment prescribed. It no more justifies similar conduct in others, or in other cases, than the execution of the criminal, law-

\* I have repeatedly heard this passage appealed to by preachers, and explained as fulfilled in the case of negro slavery; and in a way that made the impression that as slavery was foretold, it was not wrong. It reminds me of the way an old preacher some time back was reported to have addressed the black people at the close of his sermon. "And you black negroes, you are dirty, lazy creatures. You won't do your master's work without the rod. You are the cursed race of Ham. The Lord hates you, and so do I."

fully convicted and condemned, would justify putting persons to death for no crime, and without a trial.

It is farther to be remarked, that while the tribute imposed on the Canaanites may have been part of the bondage foretold, it is plain that Israel had no authority for taking that course. The command of God was express, to destroy them utterly. Instead of this, Israel spared many of them, and raised a tribute from them. They are expressly charged with disobeying God in this, (*Judges* ii. 1—3.) and assured that those tributaries or servants, (for the word means both,) “should be thorns in their sides, and pricks in their eyes; and be a snare unto them.” They proved to be so. They were a constant temptation to idolatry, as well as other crimes; and by their insurrections and wars, were an everlasting source of trouble and distress to Israel. See the Book of Judges.

The practice of the Patriarchs is often quoted in justification of slavery; but, as appears to me, very erroneously.

They may not have possessed one-tenth part of the light we do respecting moral duty. They had no written law, nor is it certain that the law of love and rule of doing as we would be done by, was known to them as the rule of morals. We know that they practised polygamy, and suppose it was owing to the fact that the spirit and principles of the seventh commandment were not unfolded to them, as it is to us; had God commanded them to love their neighbour as themselves, and laid down the properties of that love that seeketh not its own, that worketh no ill to its neighbour, that causes persons to do in all things to others as they would have men do to them; had the whole been reduced to writing, and put in their hands, as they are in ours, to be studied and applied to all their doings with their fellow men, then there would be more reason for taking their practice as a pattern. He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin. To do wrong ignorantly, differs widely from doing it knowingly, or with the means of knowing better.

But it has too readily been taken for granted, that the Patriarchs did practise slavery, properly so called. The account we have of them does not make it certain. They lived in the infancy of nations. Their contemporaries and



sons were the fathers of many of the nations of whom we read in sacred and profane history. Abraham's sons by Hagar and Keturah were the germs of many nations. Lot's sons formed the nations of Moab and Ammon; Esau and Jacob were the heads of nations, and Jacob's sons grew into twelve tribes. The whole history of the Patriarchal times show that enterprising individuals separated and set up for themselves, and with their families and followers became independent tribes. The tribe or nation often took its name from the individual at its head. The first-born of the ruling family, was usually the chief, and the rest were called his people or servants. Thus Esau, after he had sold his birth-right, was called the servant of Jacob. Isaac says that Jacob was "made lord over his brethren, and they were given him for servants.\* There were more spoken of than Esau. It refers to all the people under Isaac—those who were under Abraham, with their descendants—those four hundred with whom Esau met Jacob, as he returned from Padan Aram. These people Esau led off, and with them subdued Mount Seir, afterward called Edom, and founded the nation called Edom. We have a long list of the sons of Esau, who ruled over them. *Gen. 36.*

Now the words used to express those who are called the servants of the Patriarchs are the same that are used to express the people of any other tribe, under their rulers or kings, as the Philistines under Abimelech, the Egyptians under Pharaoh; the Israelites under Saul, David and Solomon; the Assyrians, Babylonians, &c. under their kings or rulers. Those under the Patriarchs may really have been no more slaves than the Philistines, and Egyptians, and Canaanites, were in the time of Abraham. Abraham is expressly called a great Prince;† Isaac was said to be more mighty than Abimelech;‡ and Jacob had war with the Amorites. They all formed alliances, and ruled their people as independent princes. Those under them are called their servants; but it does not follow that they were slaves.

It does not follow from what is said to Abraham about

\* *Gen. 27.*

† *Gen. xxiii. 6.*

‡ *Gen. xxvi. 16.*

bought servants, that he had slaves. It is not said that he had any of that kind, but that such, if there were any, must be circumcised; and it is stated of the three hundred and eighteen whom he led out to war, that they were *born in his house*,\* or in the community of which he was the head and prince. It would seem from this fact, that he had few bought persons at that time.

We are also to recollect that Abraham was at the head of an independent tribe, that he had war with four or five kings, that those under him were trained to arms, that he at this time had no child, that the fact of having so many born in his tribe proved their families and children were there too. How could Abraham alone have held above three hundred men, with their families, in absolute slavery, against their wills, while they had arms in their hands? They must have chosen to remain with him. It was not therefore such a slavery as exists among us.

Hagar was a servant, but it is not certain that she was a slave. The word used to express her does not prove it, nor does her rough treatment. Other servants, and especially helpless and unfriended females, often are thus treated. When sent off by Abraham, she was not sold as slaves are, but simply sent away. Jacob bought his wives, but there is not an instance of buying or selling a slave by any of the Patriarchs, unless the sale of Joseph by his brother be of that kind.

I do not say that the patriarchs had no slaves, but I say that it is not certain that they had, and in the uncertainty of the case, we ought not to assume as true what is less to their credit as pious men. It is more consistent to follow the example of Christ and his Apostles, who had attendants, but not slaves. They taught the law of love, and their practice agreed with their teaching.

The direction in the fourth commandment and many other passages respecting servants, relates to all kinds of servants that might be among them, and has nothing to do with the fact whether slavery existed, or the right or wrong of the practice.

The Midianitish prisoner† came, of course, under the law that allowed them to retain among them no servants

\* Gen. xiv. 14.

† Num. xxxi.

that were not circumcised and united to the church ; and when this took place, they were to be treated as Hebrews, and to go out free after six years.

The case of the Gibeonites is different.\* They found a considerable body of people, embracing four powerful cities. They belonged to the Canaanites that were to be destroyed ; but moved by the report of the wonders God had wrought in Egypt and the wilderness, and the destruction of the nations on the other side of Jordan ; they feared for their lives, practised a deceit on Israel, and obtained an alliance with them. After this was discovered, they were condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the tabernacle of God. I have several remarks to make on this case.

They had been condemned to be destroyed for their sins. They, to evade this, practised a deceit on Israel, who was to destroy them, and obtained the protection of a covenant and oath. The original punishment could not, therefore, without violating this covenant and oath, be inflicted ; and in place of it, and for the deceit, they were condemned to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. It is not said that this punishment was entailed on their children ; and I see not that without proof we are to take it for granted that it was. We find the Gibeonites free in the times of Saul and David.† Had they been servants to Israel at that time, Saul would hardly have destroyed them in his zeal for Israel. David treated them as free and independent, in the satisfaction which he made them for the injury received from Saul.‡ The case has nothing to do with justifying slavery.

There is a class of persons mentioned in the latter times of the history of Judah, called Nethenims, whom some seem to think were slaves ; but I apprehend without sufficient authority. The name signifies persons given or devoted. The same word is applied to the Levites,§ as set apart to aid the priests. It is to Samuel as given to the Lord by his mother to minister at the tabernacle.|| David and the princes are said to have set apart persons called from this “Nethenims.”¶ They divided the Levites into

\* Joshua ix. † Ibid.

‡ 1 Samuel i. 11.

§ 2 Samuel xxi.

¶ Ezra viii. 20.

§ Num. viii. 16.

the classes of porters, singers, judges, &c., and these classes into twenty-four courses; and finding not as many Levites as were sufficient for all the departments they were to fill, and the duties they were to perform, they added to them other persons in such numbers as were needed. There is no more proof that they were slaves, than that the Levites were slaves. They were associated with the Levites in the same offices and duties, and were, for aught that appears, as free as they. They had their possessions as well as the Levites. 1 *Chron.* ix. 2; *Neh.* iii. 26. They came freely, separated themselves to God, joined in the covenant, and aided in re-establishing the worship of God. *Ezra* viii. 15—20; *Neh.* x. 28.

Having in another place noticed the arguments drawn from the directions to servants in the New Testament, I need not dwell on them here.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER IX.

CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,

ALLOW me now to call your attention to a good many cases which, unless I am much mistaken, go most clearly to prove that slavery is morally wrong, and exposes to God's wrath. Its distinguishing features are, that it is not with the consent and for the mutual benefit of the master and slave, but forced, and for the alone benefit and pleasure of the master, and for no crime in the person thus forced to serve. It is founded in violence and force, and continued by the same means.

I first remark that violence is mentioned as the prominent sin for which God destroyed the old world by the waters of a flood. "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was full of violence; God said, the end of all flesh is come, for the earth is filled with violence; I will destroy them with the earth." *Gen. vi. 11—13.*

It is not said what kind of violence this was, whether of man on man, or nation on nation. We know not indeed whether civil government existed before the flood; nor whether the violence related to property or personal rights. This, however, does not alter the case. It proves God's hatred of violence as practised by man on man; and other passages call slavery violence and oppression.

I next adduce a case connected with the first war recorded in Scripture.

Chederlaomer, king of Elam, had subdued and held in bondage, for twelve years, the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Those kings then threw off the yoke, and attempted to defend their freedom. In the war which followed, they were beaten, and many of them, including Lot, were taken captive.

Abraham considered it a case in which justice called on him to break the rod of the oppressor, and set the oppressed free. He armed his people, and pursued them, and that it might be manifest that justice and not gain influenced him, "he lifted up his hands unto the Lord the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, (solemnly vowed,) that he would not take from a thread to a shoe-

latchet." God gave him success. He smote the oppressors, rescued the captives, recovered their goods, and let all return to their own cities. Here we have Abraham risking his own life and the lives of his people to rescue others from bondage; and when, according to a custom that early prevailed, he might have held them in servitude, he let them go free, without one shoe-latchet in return. And yet, some would have it, that he held in absolute slavery the very men with whom he performed this generous and noble exploit! How unreasonable the supposition!

The bondage of Israel in Egypt is fully described, often referred to, and was severely punished.

"They set over them task-masters to afflict them with burdens, and the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all the service wherein they made them to serve, was with rigour. And the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's task-masters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your tasks in making bricks, both yesterday and to-day? And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them. I know that Pharaoh will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand; and I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders, which I will do in the midst thereof. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants were turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him, and six hundred chosen chariots, and pursued after them, and overtook them encompassed by the sea. And the children of Israel were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord; and the Lord caused the sea to go back, and the waters were divided, and the children of Israel went into



the midst of the sea on dry ground; and the Egyptians pursued after them into the midst of the sea, and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, and saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians.—Thou shalt speak and say before the Lord, the Egyptians evil-entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction and labour and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and wonders.”—*Deut.* xxvi. 6. See the first fourteen chapters of Exodus, also the 105th Psalm.

Here is a case of slavery detailed at length, with the means used to induce the oppressors to leave it off, let the oppressed go free, enjoy the fruit of their labour, and choose the place of their habitation. This servitude is called *affliction, oppression, burdens, a yoke, and hard bondage*. God visited Egypt with many and sore judgments on account of it; and Israel was specially directed to borrow (ask or demand) gold and silver and raiment, and carry off with them in such quantities as to spoil the Egyptians. This appears evidently to have been done as a means of getting compensation for the labour exacted from them. Israel was forced to labour without wages, and God by his judgments so terrified the Egyptians, that they gave Israel what they demanded. Both king and people concurred in the hard dealings towards Israel, and both partook of the punishment.

Almost all the excuses now made in justification or palliation of slavery could have been made by that generation of Egyptians that was punished for enslaving Israel.

They could have plead that they did not begin it; that Israel were in slavery when they were born; that they formed the labouring class, and could not be set free without changing the whole state of society; that, considered as property, the Israelites were of immense value. That there were such prejudices between them and the Egyptians that they could not mingle and become one people: they were an *abomination to each other*. That they were treated well, allowed to live with their families, and to hold and accumulate property; that if correction was

used, and overseers placed over them, it was because they would not work without it. That their rapid increase proved that they were well treated.

All these and similar excuses availed not. The practice of slavery was morally wrong. Their continuing it increased their guilt, and made sure their punishment.

Moses declared to Israel, that if they sinned, God would, as a punishment, give them up to spoiling and oppression and slavery; and that if they, while thus afflicted, would turn to God, he would deliver them out of the hands of those that spoiled and enslaved them, and avenge on their enemies the evils done them. Of the many cases of this kind which took place, I will notice a few.

“They (Israel) forsook the Lord and served Baal and Asteroth, and the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and sold them into the hands of their enemies, and they were greatly distressed: nevertheless the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them.” *Judges* ii. 13.

“The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and he sold them into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and they served him eight years; and when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, Othniel—and the land had rest forty years.” *Judges* iii. 7–8.

“The children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord sold them into the hand of Jaban, king of Canaan; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and twenty years he mightily oppressed Israel: and Deborah, the prophetess, called Barak and said, hath not the Lord God commanded—take with thee ten thousand men, and I will deliver him into thine hands: and the Lord discomfited Sisera with all his hosts.” *Judges* iv. 4.

“And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon, and they vexed and oppressed Israel eighteen years; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned: and the Lord said, Did I not deliver you from the Egyp-

tians, and from the Ammorites, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, the Zidonians also, and from the Amalekites, and Maonites—yet ye have forsaken me and served other gods: the children of Israel said, We have sinned: deliver us only this day, we pray. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and the Lord delivered them into his hands: thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.” *Judges* x. 11.

It is to be remarked, that in all these cases, Israel was held in bondage—was made to serve. In most of them, they are said to be *sold* for their sins. The oppressions and bondage are ever represented as punishments; and when repented of, God delivered them. But farther, it must not be overlooked, that those who oppressed Israel and made them to serve, are *always punished* in their turn for their hard dealings towards Israel. These cases go to condemn slavery.

Slavery, as practised by Israel, is clearly represented as sinful, and deserving of punishment.

“For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof: because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes. Assemble yourselves on the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumult and the oppression in the midst thereof: For they know not to do right, who store up violence and robbery in the midst thereof. Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail; saying—that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.” *Amos* ii. 6. iii. 9. viii. 4—7.

Here, *buying* and *selling* persons is set down as a sin which should be punished—the Lord swears by himself that he will not forget it.

We have the sinfulness of slavery presented in a strong point of light by the prophet Oded, when the captives of Judah were brought to Samaria to be held as slaves.

“And the children of Israel carried away, of their brethren, two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters, and took also much spoil, and brought the spoil to Samaria. But a prophet of the Lord, Oded, said unto

them, Behold, because the Lord was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hands, and ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah for bond-men and bond-women; but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God. Now, therefore, hear me, and deliver the captives again, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you. Then certain of the heads of Ephraim said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our sin and our trespass. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation. And the men (the heads of Ephraim) rose up and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked, arrayed, shod them, gave them to eat and drink, and anointed them, and carried all that were feeble on asses, and brought them to their brethren. 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 8—15.

This is an interesting case. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah had long been at war. For the sins of Judah, God delivered them into the hands of Israel, who destroyed very many, and took captive two hundred thousand, with the purpose of holding them in slavery.

The prophet declared it sinful, and remonstrated against it; and being joined by some leading men, the plan was given up, and the prisoners, with all the spoil, restored without price or reward.

It is a striking instance of faithful and intrepid discharge of duty in a minister of religion, when the multitude are doing wrong; and of the multitude calmly listening to the truth and obeying it, at the expense of immense wealth, fairly gotten, according to the prevalent notions of that time. Had all ministers acted as this prophet did, while all might not have had his success, it need not be doubted but that there would have been much less oppression and slavery in the world. Had they so acted with respect to African slavery, it never would have been that dreadful and threatening evil it now is.

I next adduce the judgment on the kingdom of Judah for practising slavery, as recorded by Jeremiah xxxiv. The case will be more plain by noticing the state of things that preceded it.

When the king of Babylon made war on the kingdom of Judah, king Zedekiah sent to Jeremiah the prophet to inquire of the Lord on his behalf. Jeremiah was sent to the king with a message from the Lord, of which the following was the prominent part. "Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, thou and thy servants: thus saith the Lord, execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hands of the oppressor; and do no wrong; do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow; neither shed innocent blood in this place. If ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the Lord, that this house shall be a desolation: wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. *Jer. xxii. 2—5. 13.*

Influenced by these warnings, Zedekiah, during the first siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, exerted himself to correct those evils pointed out by the prophet. He particularly set himself to prevent oppression, and induced the people to engage before God to let their servants go out free. God, in approbation of this, caused the Chaldeans to raise the siege and go up from them. But when the danger was over, the people returned to the practice of slavery, and even compelled those who had gone out free to return to bondage. Jeremiah was sent to them with another message from the Lord.

"This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after that Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people that were in Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; that every man should let his man-servant and every man his maid-servant, an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. Now when all the princes and all the people heard that every one should let his man-servant, and every one his maid-servant go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, they obeyed and let them go. But afterward they turned and caused the servants and hand-maids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for hand-maids; thus saith the Lord, ye were now turned and had done right in my sight in proclaiming liberty every man



to his neighbour; but ye turned, and caused every man his servant and every man his hand-maid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return and brought them into subjection for servants and for hand-maids. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, ye have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty every man unto his brother and every man to his neighbour; behold I proclaim liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine, and I will make you to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth. Because I will cause them (the Chaldeans) to return to this city, and they shall fight against it and take it, and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation." *Jer. xxxiv.*

Here, in obedience to a command to do justice and judgment, to put an end to spoiling and oppression, not to use the service of others without wages, a temporary reformation took place, and their *giving liberty to those in bondage is the thing specially noticed*. God approves of it, declares they did *right*, and caused their enemies to leave them. Their returning to the practice of slavery is most *pointedly condemned*, and is the *special sin* for which they and their city were condemned to be destroyed.

If any attempt to weaken the force of this case by saying that it was for holding their own people in bondage, and not for holding strangers, I reply, that it has before been shown, that they were not allowed to retain slaves who did not profess the true religion. And when they professed it, they were as those born in the land, and were brethren, and could not be held to serve more than six years. They were called Jews: "Many people of the land became Jews." *Esther viii. 17.*

The general truth, however, taught in this passage is the same, if this were not the case. The distinction between Jew and Gentile, and the object for which it was made, and for a time continued, is done away. All must now be considered our neighbours and brethren. The law of love makes it our duty to love all men as ourselves, to own the brotherhood of all mankind. What the Jew might not do to his brother Jew, we must not do to any brother of the human family.

In Nehemiah, fifth chapter, we have another case. After



the return of the Jews from that captivity with which God visited them for enslaving others, some of them fell into the same practice. The subject was brought before Nehemiah and pointedly condemned.

“And there was a great cry of the people, and of their wives against their brethren, the Jews. For there were that said, our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and lo we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already, neither is it in our power to redeem them: and I was very angry, and rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said unto them: We, according to our ability, have redeemed our brethren, the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will you even sell your brethren, or shall they be sold unto us? It is not good that ye do. Ought ye not to walk in the fear of your God? Then they said, we will restore them, so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise; also I shook my lap and said, So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour, that performeth not this promise. *Neh. v.*

A comparison of the passages which speak of those that went up after the captivity, had possessions assigned them, and entered into the covenant, shows that all of them were not of Jewish descent. They are, however, called Jews and brethren, because they had “separated themselves from the people of the land unto the law of God.” *Neh. x. 28, 29. xi. 3.*

The prophecies which foretold the oppressions and bondage which Israel should suffer, represent them as punishment for sin.

“If thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore: thy sons and thy daughters shall be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long, and there shall be no might in thine hand: thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them, for they shall go into captivity. Ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women.” *Deut. xxviii.*

When those judgments fell on Israel, the prophets speak of them as punishment for sin. "Israel forsook the Lord, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of the spoilers that spoiled them, and sold them into the hands of their enemies round about. The chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, mocked the messengers of God, despised his words, misused his prophets, therefore he brought on them the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword, and had no compassion upon young men or maidens, old men or him that stooped for age; and them that had escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia." 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. Of the Chaldean, it was said, "He opened not the house of his prisoners, they held the captives fast, and refused to let them go."

Prophet and people own the justice of God in these dispensations.

"Since the days of our fathers, we have been in a great trespass, and for our iniquities have we been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, for we are bond-men; howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly, behold we are servants this day: for the land that thou gavest to our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it. And it yieldeth much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." *Ezra* ix. *Neh.* ix.

When Israel, in their affliction and bondage, repented and turned to God, he always regarded their cry, and caused them to find favour from those who held them in bondage, or raised up a deliverer, under whom they went out free.

All these cases represent slavery as a punishment, and as sinful in the dealings of man towards man.

We cannot dismiss this subject without noticing another class of examples.

Lest it should be inferred that Israel was punished for practising slavery, not on account of its moral evil, but for

violating a positive prohibition, we have in Scripture many cases of heathens punished for the same thing. It must, in these cases, be admitted that their sin was not the violation of a positive command. They had none. It must have been a sin against natural right, and equity, and justice. That it was Israel they are in some cases punished for holding in bondage, does not alter the case ; for in some cases it was not. Nor would it alter the case if it was. If it were not naturally wrong in Israel to hold others in slavery, I see not how it would be naturally wrong in others to do the same to them. If, as I think I have shown, slavery is morally wrong, and Israel was not allowed to practise it, it was criminal in the nations about Israel to deal thus hardly with her.

About the time that the judgments of God were falling on the kingdoms of Israel and Judah for their sins, most of the nations about them joined in oppressing and enslaving them. The prophets that lived at that time describe the conduct of those nations, and denounce the judgments of God on them for the same. It is stated as a general trait of their dealings towards Israel, that "the children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together, and all that took them captives, held them fast, and refused to let them go." *Jerem. v. 33.*

The kingdom of Israel was broken up by the Assyrians, and the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians. Most of the surrounding nations, however, took part in the wars against Israel, and helped much to oppress and enslave them. A few of these cases I will notice.

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Gaza, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they carried away the whole captivity, to deliver them up to Edom. I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof." *Amos i. 6.*

The practice of reducing captives to slavery and selling them, was then common. It is here specified as that sin for which Gaza should be punished.

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Tyre, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom and remembered not the brotherly covenant." *Tyre*

was a great slave-market. "They have traded in the persons of men; they have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coast of Palestine; will ye render to me a recompense? The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold to the Grecians that ye might remove them far from the border. Behold I will raise them up from the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head. And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the Lord hath spoken it." *Amos* i. 9; *Ez.* xxvi. 13; *Joel* iii. 4—8.

"The Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives," and Gaza and Tyre had sold their captives to Edom. Edom appears to have been a great slave-trader and slave-holder, as such a severe doom is pronounced against him.

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever. But I will send a fire upon Teman which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah. He will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom, he will discover thy sin; the cup shall also pass through unto thee." 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 17. *Amos* i. 11. *Lament.* iv. 22.

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead that they might enlarge their border; their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together. Thou saidst, 'Aha, against, the house of Judah, when they went into captivity. Behold, I will deliver thee to the men of the east for a possession.'" *Amos* i. 13. *Ezek.* xxv. 3.

"The Syrians smote (Israel) and carried away a great multitude of captives, and brought them to Damascus."

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away the punish-

ment thereof; because they have thrashed Gilead with thrashing instruments of iron. But I will send fire into the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the palaces of Benhadad. The people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the Lord of Hosts." 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 5. *Amos* i. 3.

"Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased: he who smote the people with a continual stroke—that made the world a wilderness—that destroyed cities—that opened not the house of his prisoners, (let not his prisoners loose homewards.) Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers their children shall be dashed in pieces before their eyes, their houses spoiled, and their wives ravished. Come down and sit in the dust, O daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; take the mill-stones and grind meal; uncover thy locks, make bare thy leg, pass over the river, (described as a slave and a captive.) I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man. I was wroth with my people, and gave them into thy hand, and thou didst show them no mercy—upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke." *Isaiah* xiii. 16, xiv. 4—21, xlvii. 1—6.

In all these cases, to which many others might be added, judgments are denounced on nations for their spoiling, and violence, and oppression. And in almost every one of them, bondage or slavery is mentioned. In those times captives were considered as a part of the booty, and were often divided among the officers and soldiers, and either retained or sold as slaves. God considers this dealing of man to man as sinful, and severely punishes it. He gives up to captivity and spoil and slavery, those who have dealt thus with others. This is strikingly set forth in the case of Babylon.—"Behold I will send and take all the families of the north, and the king of Babylon my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all the nations round about; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity; for many nations and great

kings shall serve themselves of them also. And I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the work of their own hands." *Jeremiah* xxv. 9—14.

I will close my references to Scripture examples with that of Cyrus. There is a fine contrast between him and the king of Babylon. Of the last it was said, "he opened not the house of his prisoners;" but of Cyrus it was foretold, "He shall build my city, he shall let go my captives, not for price or reward, saith the Lord of hosts." We find he did this.

"Thus saith Cyrus: The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth. Who is among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God; and whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with gold and silver and beasts." *Isaiah* xlv. 13. *Ezra* i. 3.

It is a singular coincidence that Cyrus, the only heathen that is called the "Lord's anointed," should be set forth in Scripture as letting "go captives without price or reward"—as liberating those in bondage; and that Christ our Saviour should be described as "anointed to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to those that were bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

It ought here to be observed, that the instrumental use which God, in many of the above passages, is represented as making of man in inflicting judgments on man for his sins, does not in the least lessen the sin of man in spoiling, oppressing, and enslaving others. The law of God is the rule of duty, and not that secret purpose of God, which overrules even the crimes of men, and often uses them as a rod to punish the wicked.

When God commands a person to do a particular thing, his command justifies him in doing it. The command to borrow of the Egyptians, and to destroy the Canaanites, justified Israel in so doing. But so far from commanding men to injure and oppress and enslave each other, these things are against the very spirit and tendency of his law; which requires us to do good to all men, and love them as



ourselves. Men, in inflicting on others those evils which God has threatened for their sins, are not more clearly represented as the instruments of Providence, than as doing the evil, not from any purpose to please God, but for ends of their own. This is often noticed in Scripture.

“O, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is my indignation. I will send him against the people of my wrath, to take the spoil and the prey, and to tread them down as the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few—wherefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria. *Jer.* l. 23. li. 20. *Isa.* x. 5—12.

The Scripture notices the fact, that while men do evil to their fellow men in disregard of God’s word, they often attempt to excuse their conduct by pleading that secret purpose and providence of God, which causes their disobedience to fulfil his will. “Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will.” “All that found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice. And the captain of the guard (after destroying Jerusalem and many of its inhabitants, and carrying off the rest for slaves) took Jeremiah, and said unto him, the Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now he hath brought it to pass, and done according as he hath said; because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore is this thing come upon you.” *Jer.* l. 7. xl. 2, 3.

The captain of the guard appears not to have known, or to have forgotten, the awful judgments denounced against his own country for what he was then doing. She was to be *recompensed* in the same way—to be destroyed, to be led captive, to be held in bondage—for doing these things to others. For however much they may have sinned against God, they had done nothing that justified her in thus treating them. All those nations who oppressed Israel, or oppressed each other, whom God is said to have sent against them, to whom he is said to have sold them,

who took them captive, and “held them fast and refused to let them go,” had, in their turn, the judgments of God inflicted on them.

\* “All that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, I am very sore displeased with the heathen; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he delivered them into your hands, and ye have slain them in a rage that went up to heaven; and now ye purpose to keep under the kingdom of Judah for bond-men and bond-women: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against God? Now therefore deliver up the captives again, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.” *Jer. ii. Zach. i. 2 Chron. xxviii.*

I infer, that oppressing and selling and holding our fellow men in slavery is morally wrong, and for the plain reason, that these things are charged on those nations as sins, and punished as such. Where there is no law, there is no transgression: here was transgression; there must, therefore, have been law. But it was not a revealed law of God, for the heathen had none; nor was it their civil laws, for their civil laws allowed them to do thus. It must then have been a violation of natural justice and right and equity. Some sense of this is common to man. The dictates of natural conscience “show the work of the law written in their hearts.” Balaam, as quoted by the prophet Micah, declared, that to “do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with God,” was what God required; and the king of Nineveh, in order to escape the threatened judgment, commanded his people “to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence of his hands.”\* *Rom. ii. Jonah iii.*

Yours, &c.

\* Balaam prophesied of Christ. I see no good reason for the opinion that he did not utter the sentiment in Micah vi. 5—8. as the connexion seems clearly to intimate.

## LETTER X.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

LET us, in the present letter, sum up the argument from the Old Testament against slavery, and notice its bearing on the teaching of the New, and our duty as learned from both.

The Scripture relates facts and events, both bad and good, as they took place, and often without any statement in their relation as to their morality. We cannot of course infer that an action was right from the fact that it was done by a person of a character on the whole good; for many such have done bad things. This remark is equally applicable to conditions in society, and relations which man may sustain to man. They are mentioned in the terms in common use, and mostly without any remark at the time as to their right or wrong. Scripture lays down general moral rules—the law of God, loving our neighbour as ourselves, and doing as we would be done by, which are to be applied to all the conduct of man to man, and all the relations they sustain to each other, that the right or wrong, the good or evil, may be ascertained. These principles are unfolded and carried out into the details of human conduct, by the many precepts, and warnings, and councils, and admonitions, and directions of the sacred volume.

We may farther remark that there are various moral terms often used in scripture, some expressing good and some bad conduct. They are used as words that need not be defined, being generally understood by the great mass of society. Of this kind are justice, truth, equity, kindness, goodness, &c. with many others, which when applied to any kind of conduct, prove it to be morally good. On the other hand injustice, oppression, violence, dealing hardly, and similar terms, which express moral evil, and when applied to the dealing of man to man, prove it wrong.

Now that a fair and straight-forward and common-sense application of the law of “loving our neighbour as ourselves,” and of “doing as we would be done by,” condemns holding our fellow men forcibly in bondage, and compelling them to serve without wages, is so plain that I

marvel any can doubt it. That slavery is in Scripture spoken of as violence and oppression, a hard dealing, and affliction, is past dispute. It is therefore morally wrong, and a violation of God's law.

The Mosaic institutions, and the cases of slavery mentioned in Scripture, instead of justifying it, as many have supposed, do really agree with the above rule in condemning it. The Israelites were not only reminded of their own bondage, and charged not to deal thus with others; but were not allowed to retain any servants who did not profess the true religion; and on their doing this, they were to own them as brethren, and let them go out free after six years. The law that made it death to steal or have in possession a stolen man—that giving freedom for hard usage—that forbidding them to give up a runaway servant—the jubilee law, &c. were additional guards against slavery, and showed a care to prevent it.

The passage in Leviticus xxv. which at first view seems to allow it, admits of several explanations on received principles of interpretation.

The Patriarchs had servants, but it is not certain that they were slaves, and evidently they were not held in such a condition as slaves are among us, and even if they were, still that does not make it right, any more than their practising polygamy and concubinage makes those things right.

Israel was often brought into bondage, but always as a punishment for their sins; and when they practised slavery they were severely punished for it. Heathen nations were punished for enslaving Israel, and for enslaving each other.

The bearing which this state of things, under the Old Testament, was designed to have upon our conduct towards our fellow men, under the New Testament, seems too plain to need much illustration. That it has been by so many overlooked or misunderstood is strange, and especially that the want of a special condemnation of slavery in the New Testament should be construed into a justification of it, is passing strange.

It can be accounted for only on the principle that we account for the old notions that Scripture justified persecution, church establishments, and the "divine right of kings to govern wrong." People believed these things were so,

and not distinguishing between the simple mention of them in Scripture and its approbation of them, they found a justification of them in passages that really contained no approbation at all. So persons now, taking it for granted that slavery is not wrong, think they find proof of this in every passage that speaks of servants. They overlook the fact that there may be servants where there are no slaves, and seem never to consider those passages and examples which condemn as sinful in the sight of God that forced condition of servitude called slavery.

Of the many points that might be adduced in illustration of the bearing which the facts and commands of the Old Testament, as above brought forward, have on the teaching of the New, the following are selected :—

The rule of moral duty is substantially the same under both dispensations. The moral law is that rule. Our Lord declares that he “came not to destroy the law and the prophets; that heaven and earth should pass, before one jot or tittle of the law should fail.” The New Testament is full of references to the moral teachings of the Old. It constantly refers to it as the word of God, and the rule by which mankind are to be judged. Those special precepts of the Old Testament, therefore, which forbid bondage and oppression, and enjoin the duties of justice and equity and kindness, are really binding on us.

To this we must add, that the moral teaching of the Scriptures is illustrated and enforced by the dealings of God towards mankind, according as their conduct was good or evil. A record is made of these dispensations, and we are assured “that they happened for examples, and were written for our admonition.” The destruction of the old world by the waters of a flood proves God’s hatred of that violence and corruption of morals with which the world was then filled; and the fires which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah equally prove God’s hatred of the vices practised by those cities. All will admit this. Now, on the very same principle, the judgments of God on Egypt at the time of Moses, and those on Judah under Zedekiah, and those on Assyria and Babylon, and the other nations, as noticed in my last letter, prove God’s hatred of oppression and slavery, for which

they were sent. It may, I think, be safely said, that there is no breach of the second table of the law, no sinful conduct of man towards man, which God by more examples has shown to be evil in his sight, than slavery. If any one doubt this, let him look over the examples adduced, and others of a similar kind, and compare them with the examples he may be able to find of God's hatred of any other hard dealing of man towards his fellow man.

I next remark, that while the moral law is really the same under both dispensations, and while all its teachings and illustrations in the Old are equally binding under the New Testament, the spirituality of the law, as well as its universality, is more fully set forth in the New than in the Old Testament. While an object remains precisely the same, we may see it much more clearly under the blaze of day, than in the gloom of twilight. The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is really the same in the Old as in the New Testament, yet we have no statement of its spirituality in the Old that equals the following in the New: "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." The same may be said of the seventh: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whoso marrieth her that is put away, committeth adultery." Every part of the law, it is true, is not thus unfolded in its spirituality; nor was it needful that it should. It is done in a sufficient number of cases to establish and illustrate the general principle.

The universality of the law, as embracing all mankind, and binding us to love all men as ourselves, and perform all the duties of kindness and well-doing to them, is made equally plain. The moral law did in fact always require this. And loving others as themselves—yea, thus loving the stranger, was expressly enjoined on Israel. There were, however, many things in the Mosaic rites, which were designed to keep Israel, as God's visible people, from such an intercourse with idolaters as might endanger their religion and morals. These rites taken in



connection with the fact, that God made use of Israel as an instrument to destroy the idolatrous Canaanites, were construed by Israel into a permission to hate all people but their own. The word neighbour not being defined in the command, they took it to mean their own people; and considered the command to love *them*, as implying that they might hate all others. This limitation of the command was wholly unauthorized; and, not to mention other facts, the command "to love the stranger as themselves," was sufficient to have shown this.

Our Lord corrected this perversion of the law: "Ye have heard it said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."

It is not necessary to quote the many passages which agree with the above, and go directly to show, that as God hath "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," so he hath made it the duty of all to regard each other as of the same brotherhood, and love them as themselves. All must recollect the peculiar force and beauty, with which our Lord set this forth, in the parable of the good Samaritan. The very point was brought up to him by the question, "*who is my neighbour?*" in an attempt to evade the obligation to love all others as themselves. Our Lord in answer, spoke that parable; and having in it brought together the Jew and the Samaritan, the two people that, under the sun, at that time, had the most bitter prejudice against each other; and having set forth the disinterested kindness of the Samaritan to the Jew, when his own Levite and Priest had neglected him, he put back the question, "*Which now was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?*" The correct answer could not be mistaken: "*He that showed mercy on him.*" "Go," says our Lord, "*and do thou likewise.*" A more beautiful and forcible illustration of the law of love, both as to its universality and obligation, never was given, and cannot be conceived.

The Mosaic ritual, through their misapprehension of its intent and use, appears to have been to the Jews the great occasion of their error, in limiting the law of love to their own people. This ritual was fulfilled by Christ, and is

done away under the New Testament ; and this occasion of error is removed. But more than this. The error itself was combated again and again, by our Lord and his apostles. The middle wall of partition was declared to be taken down, Jew and Gentile made one, and the whole question placed in so many points of light, so often discussed and decided, that he must be sceptical indeed who still can doubt.

The case of slavery as a moral question, and as a practice in the church, was as well settled, and stood on the same ground as the Sabbath, devoting children to God, contributing to the support of religion, attending public worship, praying to God in families, and many such things.

None of these have much said about them in the New Testament. They are clearly appointed in the Old : the New refers to them as things existing. It takes for granted that the authority of the Old, which it constantly asserts, has settled these points. The morality of slavery stands on the same ground. Its evil is as fully set forth in the Old, both by precept and example. When in this state of the question, we read the New, I see not how any can doubt, that much, very much of its teachings go directly to condemn slavery.

We have not only the general spirit and tendency of the law, and those many special applications of it, made to the Jews and others respecting slavery, but we have the greater light of the New Testament, by which to read them. While all the commands given to Israel, when taken together, and fairly interpreted, allowed but a very limited servitude ; they were still more strict in preventing the bondage of their own people. Now, what the Jew might not do to his brother Jew, we may not do to any of the brotherhood of man. Those commands, and warnings, and remonstrances against enslaving each other ; and those judgments of God upon them for doing it, are fully as applicable to the case of our holding negroes in slavery, as a thousand things in the history of Israel, which, by common consent, are considered as applicable in their general instruction to mankind now.

The very spirit of the gospel is one of kindness, and love, and well doing. As a dispensation of God towards

us, these attributes shine forth in every part of it. And its language towards us is, "be ye followers of God." We are to forgive others, as we hope to be forgiven. We are to do good for evil, as God does to us. We are to be kind and compassionate to our fellow men, while we seek for compassion, and all good things, at the hand of God.

Now, holding our fellow men in the hardest of all conditions, and compelling them to serve us without wages, and at the sacrifice of their own happiness, and all for no fault, is wholly of another spirit than that which the gospel manifests towards us, or requires at our hands.

The spirit of the gospel is beautifully set forth in that prophecy which declares the objects for which Christ was anointed and set apart as our Saviour. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek : He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn." That this has a primary reference to spiritual blessings, is readily admitted. Temporal blessings, however, are not excluded. As temporal evils and deliverances from them are here used to set forth spiritual things, so Christ, during his ministry, while fulfilling this prophecy, pitied and relieved those under them. He literally made the lame to leap as an hart, caused the tongue of the dumb to sing, the blind to see out of obscurity, and the leper to be clean. The example of Christ, and the spirit of his gospel do, in their whole tenor, oppose and condemn slavery.

The New Testament classes slavery among those hard dealings of man towards man, which are contrary to the law of love, and sinful in the sight of God. "For ye suffer it, if a man bring you into bondage, (or hold you in bondage,) if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man smite you on the face."\* Here being reduced to slavery, or held in it, is classed with being plundered and spoiled and buffeted. The primitive Christians were often exposed to these evils, and bore them patiently for

Christ's sake. Not only is slavery classed with them, but placed first. To infer that because they patiently bore spoiling and buffeting, that therefore those committed no sin who thus treated them, would be considered by all as a most unwarranted conclusion; and yet not a few reason thus respecting slavery. It deserves a remark, that the original word in this place is not Δουλοι, (douloi), which means to make a servant; but Καταδουλοι, (katadouloi), to make a slave—to reduce to that condition, which we insist is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, the law of love, and the moral bearings of the Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament.

The apostle James (iii. 9.) mentions it not only as a sin, but as a sin of peculiar aggravation, that men cursed their fellow men, “who were made in *the similitude of God*.” It showed an awful irreverence and ungodliness to curse what bore God's image.

If bearing God's image made it thus sinful to curse man, does not the same reason make it peculiarly improper—yea, irreverent towards God, to hold men in absolute slavery? What! hold in slavery a being that was made in the image of God?

Add to this that masters are commanded to “render or give to servants what is just and equal; and to remember that they have a Master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons.” Now what is just and equal between man and man? By what rule is it to be measured? No doubt, by the moral law—the law of love, the rule of doing as we would be done by. Self-love would lead all masters to think it very hard to be held in slavery for no crime, and very unjust and unequal for any thus to treat them. Of course, the rule of justice and equity requires that they should not deprive others of that freedom, which, in their own case, they so highly prize.

Take another case. The apostle, in exhorting Christians to contentment and submission to the providence of God, gives it as a general rule, that they should remain in the condition or calling in which the Gospel found them, and not be given to change. He instances several cases, and among others, that of servants. He tells them, not to let the fact that they are in a state of servitude make them

discontented; but at the same time, directs them to obtain their freedom if they can, and gives as a reason for this direction—"ye are bought with a price, be not therefore the servants of man." This passage has so evidently a reference to a passage in Leviticus, that it may well pass for a quotation. "For to me the children of Israel are servants: they are my servants whom I brought out of Egypt—they shall not be sold as bond-men."

It was a rule under the Old Testament, that from their relation to God, it was unlawful for any to hold God's people in slavery. The apostle here appeals to this rule, as making it the duty of the servant to obtain his freedom if he could. As many of them, however, might have masters who had no regard for God's word, who were Pagans, and who would not give them freedom—the apostle advises them, in such cases, to submit to their hard lot—to glorify God by patiently enduring evil, and do nothing that might cause "the way of truth to be evil spoken of." The whole case, taken together, shows clearly, that the apostle considered the condition of the slave a hard one; and one which the law of love condemned.

Some may perhaps think, that if these principles had been intended to have this bearing on this case, the apostles would in so many words have wholly forbid the practice of slavery.

In reply to this it may be asked, why did they not, when treating of marriage, wholly forbid polygamy and concubinage? They prevailed much at that time. Why did they not forbid games, plays, gladiator shows, and many such things? Why did they not directly enjoin the observance of the Sabbath, attending public worship, the baptism of children, with many such things? The most of these were plainly taught in the Old Testament, and its authority is constantly recognized; and in the Old Testament the evil of slavery is fully set forth. Their hearers are supposed to be acquainted with the teaching of the Old Testament, to be obedient to it, and to infer their duty from it. 1 Cor. x. 1—13.

There is reason to believe that the primitive Christians did thus apply the principles of the Old and New Testament to the case of slavery. We have not much, it is

true, that bears on this case. Nor have we much in their writings that bears on the question of the Sabbath, their devoting children to God in baptism, their taking no part in plays, gladiator shows, the amusement of the theatre, &c. There are, however, some passages in their writings which show their high regard for personal liberty, and deep solicitude that others should enjoy it.

“We know how many among ourselves,” says St. Clement, in his epistle to the Corinthians, “have given up themselves unto bonds, that thereby they might free others from them. Others have sold themselves into bondage, that they might free their brethren with the price of themselves.”

The churches of Armida not only raised all the money they could, but sold the plate and furniture of their churches, and redeemed seven thousand Persians, who were offered for sale by the Romans; and set them free, and sent them home to their people.

Sindonites, a zealous Christian, was set free twice on being instrumental in converting his master. See Cave's primitive Christianity.

The primitive Christians were accustomed, it is said, to take up collections weekly, and apply them to redeem persons from slavery, and especially their brethren. Their kindness to the poor was so notorious, that Julian ascribed their success in spreading the Gospel mainly to it. This gave them great favour with the lower classes, many of whom were in slavery.

Yours, &c.



## LETTER XI.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,\*

THERE are many other points of view in which the inconsistency of slavery with the spirit of the Gospel forces itself on our attention. Several of them I beg leave to notice.

It must necessarily happen, that much oppression and hard dealing will take place under a system which subjects one class of persons to such an extent to the uncontrolled power of another. The man who believes the Scripture account of human nature, or who has to any practical purpose looked back upon its past history or abroad upon its present population, will not need to have the point argued before him. He must see in all the guards of society, in all the protections for person and property, in all the securities of civil government, proof of the evils man is liable to from man.

I am far from charging slave-holders generally with cruel or harsh dispositions. Many of the finest examples of kindly and benevolent feeling that I have ever known, were slave-holders. Add to this their hospitable, generous, and liberal dispositions, and more excellent specimens of human nature can perhaps nowhere be found. That the slave does, in the treatment he receives, experience, to a great extent, the effects of these amiable traits of character, is unquestionable. All the accounts which I have heard, and all my observation, satisfies me, that a great melioration has taken place in the general treatment of slaves; and I have no doubt, that this kindness of feeling with respect to slaves, connected with the impression that their case is a hard one—that they have not the proper inducements to industry and faithfulness, that they are wholly in the power of the master, leads many slave-holders to indulge their slaves and wink at their faults, to the injury of the temporal interests of the masters, and not to the benefit of the slave. I have often heard slave-holders say, and I had no reason to doubt their statement, that their slaves did not

\* This and the following letter are, with various alterations, taken from an essay by the author.

clear charges—that they were positively bringing them in debt. But what can we do, said they? We must have servants. We dislike to part with those that have long been in the family, and we try to get along with them as well as we can. I have often heard them apologize for the idleness and negligence of slaves. Poor creatures, they would say, we ought not to expect as much of them as if they were working for themselves. Idle as they are, we at times wonder they do as well, considering their situation.

I have repeatedly had occasion to remark, that European and northern men, when they had to manage slaves, have complained more, and, if I mistake not, exacted more labour, and used more compulsory means in doing it, than the better class of persons raised as slave-holders. This is easily accounted for. They have been used to free labourers; who, the world over, do more work, and do it better, and with less trouble to the employer, than can be had from slaves. Their ideas of a reasonable portion of labour is taken from what they have seen done—perhaps done themselves; and knowing that it can be done, and is done, when the labourer inclines to do it, they feel strongly disposed to exact it, or complain much if it be not done: while the person accustomed to slave-labour, gets habituated to expect little, and complains less, and uses fewer compulsory means to exact that little, than the other does to get double the amount.

The female department furnishes some of the best illustrations of this matter. A female, accustomed to free servants, will, with the aid of one woman and a small boy or girl, or at most two women, manage the concerns of a large family, and have everything done in its proper time and place, and all as neat as a bandbox. But let her be transplanted into a slave-holding community, and have to carry on the same operations with slaves; and she will have double the difficulty and vexation in effecting it with her cook, washer-woman and house-maid and nurse, and perhaps two or three nondescripts into the bargain.

With all the above admissions, and many more that need not be detailed, it is still true that there is, and while human nature remains what it is, there will be, much op-

pression and hard dealing towards slaves. The very circumstance of degradation and entire dependence of the slave, which on humane and generous minds excite pity and kindness, often operates differently on minds of a contrary cast. The unkind, the unfeeling, the fault-finding, the cruel, the selfish, the passionate, yea, that whole class of persons, in whom the evil passions predominate over the good, have, in their slaves, objects on which these dispositions may be daily employed. There are many ways in which those bad passions may be excited. The whole employment of the slave having a relation to the ease, interest, or credit of the master, must constantly call into action those dispositions with which he regards those various interests; and if those feelings be not satisfied, the slave is liable to feel the consequences. And even with those that, on the whole, are kind to their slaves, things often take place, that may go far to make the life of the slave miserable. There are often, with good people, peculiarities of disposition, which are a torment to those about them—a fretfulness, a peevishness, a fault-finding, which sleeps only when the possessor sleeps. No harm is meant, but still it is a thorn in the flesh. Husbands at times show it towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands; parents towards their children, and children towards their parents. In these cases there are the checks of natural affection, character, standing, &c.; but the poor slave is exposed to the same without these checks, he cannot fly from them, he must not even complain.

It is a great evil of slavery, and shows in a strong point of light how unnatural it is, that on the one hand it deprives the slave of the proper inducements to industry, and on the other, frees the master from the needful checks to his evil passions. It gives the slave no interest in the fruit of his labour; he does not work for himself, his wife and children, but for the benefit of others. It is not in human nature to believe and toil without a motive. Deprive a man of those proper for him, his own interest and the interest of those that are a part of himself, and he will be like a watch without a main spring. Other motives, as force or fear, may be substituted, but they will not operate as the former would. And where they do set the slave to

work, they cannot give him *a heart for it*. The same amount of labour is more oppressive to the slave than to the free.

On the other hand, the master exacts labour from the slave for his own benefit; and under such a system, he will ever be liable to seek his own interest at the expense of hard dealing to the slave. If any difficulty be met with, if any of the bad passions be excited, if the slave do not so act as to satisfy, there is danger of passion being indulged with little regard to the feelings of the slave.

In the case of hired servants there is a safeguard. Hard usage, undue demands, unreasonable requisitions, evil tempers, &c., are restrained by the fact that the servant is not more dependent on the master for employment, than the master is on the servant to labour for him. The hired servant has the proper motives for industry, his own benefit; and the master has the proper check on his disposition, his own interest. Slavery inverts the whole case, and instead of placing things on the ground of a just reciprocity—instead of the inducements and checks proper for human nature, so arranges things that both master and slave must suffer.

Some allege that public sentiment is a sufficient restraint on the master, and gives a sufficient protection to the slave. That it does much, is admitted, but not that it is sufficient. It is not sufficient between the masters themselves, where it has tenfold more force. Such is the general feeling towards slaves, that conduct towards them will hardly be noticed, which, if to a white man, would produce no little scandal; and yet, with this greater protection from public sentiment, masters would think it a great grievance to have no other for their persons, families and property. Such ought in consistency to own that it is not a sufficient protection for the slave. To claim one rule for ourselves, and say another is sufficient for the slave, is to have “in the bag divers weights, which is an abomination to the Lord.”

All who are acquainted with negro slavery know, that there are many cases in which the condition of the slave is most hard, where the labour is severe and oppressive, the food and clothing both in kind and quantity not what

it ought to be; where the labours and toils of life seldom meet with any compensation, or even approbation, and where, as to his spiritual concerns, it may emphatically be said, "no man cares for his soul," and where all these personal evils are embittered by the galling reflection, this is the doom of my kindred, it awaits my children and my children's children for generations to come.

Where oppressions, and injuries, and wrongs, are the natural results of a system, it is not enough that we ourselves do not oppress. We are bound by the laws of love, and mercy, and justice, to do all we can to put an end to it. "Be ye not partakers with them." If we refuse to aid in removing it, we are accountable in the sight of high heaven for neglect of duty, and will not stand clear of a participation in the guilt of said oppressions and wrongs.

But oppressions and wrongs, although highly offensive to God, are not the only evils resulting from slavery. There are others equally, perhaps more, crying. It is a hateful feature of the present system of slavery, that it gives no protection to family connections—to the marriage relation, or to female purity. The slave is held as property, and may be sold, or given away, or disposed of by will; and, life and limb excepted, be treated as other property.

Occasionally, the husband and wife belong to the same person, and live together; much more frequently, however, they belong to different owners, and see each other more or less frequently, according to their distance apart, and the time allowed them for that purpose. Their marriages are not recognized or protected by law. The reason no doubt is, that this might interfere with the right of property in the master. If the law protected the marriages, it might at times prevent sales and transfers of slave-property.

Some slaves have, indeed, a marriage ceremony performed. It is, however, usually done by one of their own colour, and of course is not a legal transaction. And if done by a person legally authorized to perform marriages, still it would have no authority, because the law does not recognize marriage among slaves, so as to clothe it with the rights and immunities which it wears among citizens.

The owner of either party might, the next day or hour, break up the connection in any way he pleased. In fact, their connections have no protection, and are so often broken up by sales and transfers and removals, that they are by the slaves often called "taking up together." The sense of marriage fidelity must be greatly weakened, if not wholly destroyed, by such a state of things. The effect is most disastrous.

But there is another circumstance which deserves our notice. What effect is likely to be produced on the morals of the whites, from having about them, and under their absolute authority, female slaves who are deprived of the strongest motives to purity, and exposed to peculiar temptations to opposite conduct! The condition of female slaves is such, that promises and threatenings and management can hardly fail to conquer them. They are entirely dependent on their master. They have no way to make a shilling, to procure any article they need. Like all poor people they are fond of finery, and wish to imitate those who are above them. What, now, are not presents and kind treatment, or the reverse, if they are not complying, likely to effect on such persons? And the fact that their children, should they have any through such intercourse, may expect better treatment from so near relations, may have its influence. That the vice prevails to a most shameful extent is proved from the rapid increase of mulattoes. Oh, how many have fallen before this temptation: so many, that it has almost ceased to be a shame to fall! Oh, how many parents may trace the impiety and licentiousness and shame of their prodigal sons, to the temptations found in the female slaves of their own or neighbours' households. Irregular habits are thus formed, which often last through life. And many a lovely and excellent woman, confiding in vows of affection and fidelity, trusting to her power over her devoted lover, has, after uniting her fate with his, and giving him all that a woman has to give, found when too late how incorrigible are those habits of roving desire, formed in youth, and kept alive by the temptations and facilities of the slave system.

Now when we read the repeated declarations that "fornicators and adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of



God ;” and call to mind the teaching of our Lord, that all intercourse between the sexes, except what takes place between one man and one woman in marriage faith, amounts to those crimes ; how can we, as believers in Christianity, uphold a system which presents this temptation both to the bond and free, and yet escape a participation in the guilt ?

I notice as another evil of slavery, that it is hostile to that instruction of slaves, which, if not absolutely necessary, is exceedingly important to their salvation. The policy of most slave-owners is to keep their slaves in ignorance. This often extends to religious matters. Very little attention is paid to instructing them in religion. Neither is this peculiar to the irreligious part of the community. You must all admit that many professors of religion pay almost no attention to this matter ; and not one in five hundred pays as much attention as he feels bound to pay in the case of his own children. But few teach their slaves to read God’s word, and how few are careful to have it read to them. How many heads of families, who would think themselves greatly neglectful of the salvation of their children, if they did not pray with and for them, and take them to the house of God, almost wholly neglect these matters as regards their slaves ? They may, perhaps, occasionally tell some of their slaves that they ought to attend preaching ; but what facilities do they give them for attending ? Their slaves have laboured all the week, and are, it may be, from four to ten miles from the place of preaching—must be at home that evening or early next morning—have, perhaps, no clothes fit to be seen in—may wish to see a wife, or husband, or child, who lives in an opposite direction—have no time for this but on the Sabbath. The slave is blamed for not attending preaching. He may deserve blame ; but taking the whole case into view, the fault does not altogether lie on the slave. The master who holds him in slavery, who requires his constant labours, is often justly chargeable in the sight of God with the irreligion of his slaves ; and that many a professor of religion will at last have a fearful reckoning on this matter, I have no more doubt than I have that we have a Master in Heaven, “ who is no respecter of persons.”

It is often said, and not without reason, that there is a growing indisposition among slaves to worship with their masters, and attend on the preaching of the whites. It is by some ascribed to stubbornness and perverseness in the slaves. Far be it from me to say that slaves are not to be blamed for this. To worship and serve God is a duty so important, that nothing unpleasant in the circumstances of the duty, or the person officiating, or the company of worshippers, can justify its neglect. While this is admitted, truth at the same time requires me to say, that if the prejudices of the slave against worshipping with the whites or attending their preaching, grow out of a system, which, in a change of circumstances, would produce similar prejudices in the minds of any other body of men; then much of the blame lies on the system, and *its supporters* cannot, in the sight of impartial Heaven, stand clear of a participation in the guilt.

Now that this prejudice in slaves, against worshipping with the whites, may be traced mainly to the system of slavery is to me most certain. The relation between the master and the slave is not one of mutual agreement, in which there is a quid pro quo, a stipulated service for a stipulated reward; but one of force on the part of the master, and hard necessity on the part of the slave. It is absolute authority on the one part, and necessary submission on the other; and as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, are self-evidently unalienable rights, so the love of them is inlaid in our natures, and lives and dies with us.

That slaves should think their case hard, is as natural as that they should think at all; and that this should lead to hard thoughts of those who forcibly hold them in bondage, is equally natural. That harsh usage, unkind treatment, and frequent fault-finding, on the part of masters (and what the master thinks reasonable may to the slave have this appearance,) should greatly increase these hard thoughts, is one of the most natural things in the world. It could not, humanly speaking, be otherwise. That most slaves are disposed to complain of their situation—that they do complain when comparing notes with each other, will hardly be questioned by those who have paid much attention to the subject. Now with this general feeling of

discontent at the whites, is it at all wonderful that slaves should have little relish for joining them in religious worship?

Suppose the master a professor of religion and prays in his family. After labouring during the day, the slave comes home and throws himself down to rest. He was called out, it may be, pretty early—has laboured under the eye of a watchful master or overseer—has been found fault with as to his manner of doing his work, or his not doing it faster—has been scolded and threatened, and perhaps whipped—has made his meal, it may be, in the field, and on provisions much inferior to what he knows his master and family enjoy. His labours for the day are, however, closed. Presently he hears the horn blow or the bell ring for prayers. What now are the thoughts which would most likely pass through the mind of a slave of no decided religious feelings. Ah, the white folks are going to be religious now; master is going to pray. He takes his ease all day, and makes us poor negroes do his work. He is always finding fault, and scolding and whipping us. I don't think his prayers will do much good—I won't go to prayers.

Their aversion to attend family prayers is so common as to be the subject of frequent remark. I think nine times out of ten, few attend even in professors' houses, except the house-servants, and not unfrequently they slip out of the house when the family assembles for prayer. Similar feelings operate against their worshipping publicly among the whites. This is the greater evil as few of them are prepared to instruct their fellows; and even their assemblies for that purpose, are discouraged as dangerous.

Any race of people placed in the same situation would be affected in the same way. Taking human nature as it now is, it could not well be otherwise. It is the natural result of slavery on such creatures as we are. A sense of injury will produce feelings of dislike and opposition. It will beget distrust in the religion of the master. It will produce prejudice against the religion which he professes.

When the attempt was made to force the rites and forms of Episcopacy on the Scots, and oblige the Puritans to *read* their prayers, wear the gown and bands, kneel at the sacrament,

and attend the Episcopal service, they would have suffered their ears to be cut off, and their heads into the bargain, rather than comply. The very attempt excited most decided opposition against the whole establishment.

Most of you have probably heard of the dying man, who, when inquired of as to his hopes of getting to Heaven, asked if such a man, his enemy, was in heaven? and on being answered, it was hoped he was, replied that in that case he had no wish to go there—that it was no place for him. Whether the anecdote be true or not, it has much of human nature in it, especially of human nature in its unrenewed state.

Now I put it to you, in the sight and fear of God, how you can uphold a system, which, in addition to all its other evils, operates so directly against the salvation of souls? “Wo to the world because of offences”—“wo to that man by whom they come.”

To perpetuate such a system for the sake of gain, for the sake of making fortunes for your children, how awful the thought! On what does the life, and comfort, and salvation of your child depend? Is it not on the grace and mercy of God? And what reason have you to expect that mercy, while you deal thus hardly with the slave? Remember the word, “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

Yours, &c.

## LETTER XII.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THERE is another evil growing out of the present system of slavery, which, taken alone, ought to induce all to give it up, or use all their influence to have it wholly changed—I mean the internal traffic carried on in slaves.

Most persons, I suppose, agree in condemning the slave-trade, as carried on from the coast of Africa. The injustice, the cruelty, the abominations, that attend it, are condemned by all. And yet it may be asked, wherein is it worse than the slave-trade carried on among us? Who that lives on a public road, who that attends a court-house, who that visits any place of trade, in the slave-holding States, that has not seen negroes bought and sold like any other kinds of property, and drove in gangs along the public roads, and often in chains? Who does not know that hundreds of thousands of dollars are employed in this trade? That vessels run constantly from the Middle to the South-western States, loaded with slaves? And that many men of high standing in society, are interested in the traffic? Who does not know that in this trade, little or no regard is paid to the nearest and dearest relations in life? That the husband and wife, the parent and child, are separated without hesitation, when a better bargain can in that way be obtained? Who does not know that one of the common modes both of selling and hiring, is to set them up to the highest bidder?

Many say they abhor the business of the negro-trader, and cannot respect the man who follows it. Too hard a name can hardly be given to the nefarious traffic; and I could wish that a hundred-fold more abhorrence were felt for the man that follows it. I doubt, however, whether it will be stopped, while the present system of slavery continues. While slaves are held as absolute property, there will be a trade in that property; and while a trade is attended with such a profit as attends the slave-trade to the South, we may expect it to go on, and with much of that unfeelingness and disregard to family ties, which now attend it. No passion is more unfeeling than avarice—"the love of money is the root of all evil."

Those who have hearts to feel for a fellow creature's woes and a fellow creature's wrongs, ought to give all their influence, either wholly to put an end to slavery, or so to change its leading features as to prevent those enormous evils which now spring from it; and they ought never to forget that one of our most efficient ways of doing good, is to give to the cause of truth and duty the influence of a good example. There are, no doubt, thousands of cases in which real injury would result both to the slave and to the owner, from at once breaking up the relation, and letting the slave go out free. Experience has proved, that in a large number of cases, evil has resulted from premature liberation. The laws, also, in many of the States present peculiar difficulties to emancipation. The emancipated slave, without regard to his family relations, is obliged immediately to leave the State, or to forfeit his freedom. The poverty of the liberated slave, his ignorance, his want of a habit of managing for himself, &c., may and often do, lead to more suffering and more vice, than compensates for the boon of freedom, in the circumstances in which it is given. All this being admitted, and we are in duty bound to give it its due weight, when considering the question of duty in this matter, still it is true, and must be true, that we are on the other hand, bound to give to the cause of freedom, the aid of a wise, prudent, and good example. Slaveholders, as individuals, ought to take such a course with their slaves as will, as soon as possible, fit them for the enjoyment of freedom, and then set them free. Many things ought, of course, to be taken into the account, in deciding at what time each slave ought to be freed; their habits, relations, turn for managing for themselves, their prospects for doing well, either at home or abroad.

This is plainly one of those cases in which we ought to count on making some sacrifices. The practice of slavery is wrong, the customs of society are wrong, the practice of the church is wrong, the laws of the land are wrong. Now, to correct the wrong in all these respects will require us to give up, more or less, not what the law of God, but what the laws of the land and the customs of society, allow us to retain.



When we compare the practice of the church respecting slavery, with its practice respecting the fashionable amusements of dancing, balls, horse-racing, gambling, attending the theatres, &c., I know not how we can avoid seeing the inconsistency. Most professors condemn these amusements, and think it much out of character for members of the church to engage in them. Whether engaging in them would, in all our churches, be considered a proper matter for church-discipline, I know not : but I feel assured that it would be considered as not very consistent with a profession of religion.

Some of you may possibly recollect an incident that took place while I was among you.

A *dancing-master* came into the neighbourhood to engage a school, wishing to secure a good reception among a people reputed pious, he brought letters introducing him as a "*pious dancing-master*." Had he been introduced as a little-big man, a long-short man, or white-black man, I question whether it would have sounded more strange to many of you. Some were not a little amused at it : and again and again did I hear "*pious dancing-master*" repeated with roars of laughter.

And yet it may be asked, is there really an absolute incompatibility between dancing and religion? Might not a person with as good a conscience follow dancing for a livelihood, as to hold his fellow-creatures in bondage, and live on the proceeds of their labour? I can certainly conceive of a person reasoning on the case, and coming to the conclusion, that dancing was in various respects more consistent with piety, than the common practice of slaveholding.

Were the advocates for fashionable amusements to ask you why it was wrong to join in a dance, to attend a ball, go to a horse-race, or take their families to the theatre ; were they to ask for the passages of Scripture that condemned each of these things,—you would possibly find some difficulty in getting passages that would fully satisfy them. You would probably answer them, that it was true these follies were not in so many words named and condemned, but that those passages of Scripture which command us not to "be conformed to the world," to

“come out and be separate,” to “go not in the way of temptation,” to “shun the appearance of evil,” &c., were against these things. You would most likely dwell on the fact, that they tend to draw off the mind from religion, and produce and strengthen feelings that are at war with the interests of the soul; that they beget vanity, love of the world, a fondness for show and display, that they lead to lasciviousness and sensuality, and tend to hardness of heart and disregard for the rights of others.

I readily admit all this. Those amusements do so naturally oppose the spirit of the gospel, that persons who have a care for souls and the interests of religion, ought, however unpopular the duty, and however much reproach it may draw on them, use their influence to discountenance them.

Now compare these amusements and their effects, with slavery and its effects. Compare them as to the Scriptures which condemn them directly, or condemn their principle, or condemn them on account of their tendency to evil. You must admit that not many if any of those amusements are, in so many words, named and condemned in Scripture. They must, if condemned at all, be condemned by applying to them some of the general rules given us in Scripture for regulating our conduct. Several of them have been noticed above. Now are there not general rules given us to regulate our conduct towards our fellow men? Do not the rules, “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” and “do to men in all things as we would have them do to us,” as plainly relate to our conduct towards others, as the rule, “come out from the world,” condemns its follies? Does not the rule of doing as we would be done by, as certainly condemn our depriving our fellow men of their dearest rights, and holding them in bondage, as any rule that can be adduced from Scripture condemns the above amusements? Is any one willing to be deprived of his rights and held as a slave? Is any willing to be as much at the mercy of another as the slave is at the mercy of his owners? Is any willing to live under the disabilities that belong to the state of slavery; and to be liable to all the evils to which the slave is liable? Most assuredly not. And does not the rule of

doing as we would be done by apply to this case? The man who can in the words "be not conformed to this world," see a plain condemnation of balls, dancing, horse-racing, attending the theatre, &c., and yet can see nothing in the law of "loving our neighbour as ourself," and "doing as we would be done by," that goes to condemn holding his fellow men in slavery, must have the art of seeing things, not as they really are, but as he wishes them to be. The application of the latter rules to slavery is so direct and straight-forward, compared with the former, that it requires an effort to believe that a person who is so clear-sighted in the one case, should, with his attention drawn to the other, be unable to see its application.

As to the tendency of these amusements to worldly affections, to vanity, sensuality, &c., I feel satisfied that it is not equal to the tendency of slavery to hardness of heart, injustice, oppression, licentiousness, and a whole train of kindred evils. Let any one examine into the effect of attending balls, the theatre, &c., on those persons devoted to those amusements, and estimate the proportion whose irreligion has been confirmed, whose worldly spirit has been strengthened, and whose purity has been lost through their influence; and compare it then with the multitudes who through the influence of slavery have been formed to a harsh, unfeeling, overbearing, and licentious character. Is it not a fact, that the general manner of treating slaves, owing chiefly to the absolute authority of the master and the necessary subjection of the slave, is positively rough and unfeeling, compared with the manner of treating other people? The same treatment to a hired servant would soon leave the master to do his own work and wait on himself; hired servants would not bear it. This circumstance tends to beget respect for the feelings of those in the lower places of society. It leads to mildness of manner, and regard for the rights and feelings of others. The effect is beneficial to the master, and salutary to society.

But in the case of slavery the matter is otherwise. The slave must submit to all things and bear all things. However unreasonable the requirements, however rough the treatment, however abusive the language—they must sub-

mit, and for the most part without complaint. Can any one who takes a fair view of the condition of slaves, considered as absolutely under the power of their masters, as not protected in their family relations, as subject to separation at pleasure, as deprived of the best protection to their purity and conjugal fidelity—can any one who takes a full view of this subject in all its bearings, doubt whether greater evils do not flow from it than from balls, dances, gambling, and the whole round of fashionable amusements? I feel confident that all these amusements put together do not produce one-tenth part of the vice that slavery does, nor do one-tenth part as much to vitiate the morals of society.

Now there appears a manifest inconsistency in professors of religion and ministers of the gospel making such an outcry against these amusements, while they not only tolerate, but join in the practice of slave-holding. The fault does not lie in opposing these amusements, but in allowing themselves to countenance a practice which is tenfold more injurious.

The advocates for amusements can say in palliation of their practice, “if injury be done, it is done to ourselves; we force no one to join us, all is voluntary.” Can the slave-holder say as much respecting slavery? Is the slave allowed to choose in the matter?

If any say they are not sure slavery is wrong, cannot and do not many say the same of their favourite amusements? But does that satisfy? Will you allow your fellow professor to take the lead in all these amusements, and yet admit him to all the privileges of the church? Suppose a preacher of the gospel were to join in those amusements, and excuse himself by saying “he was not sure they were wrong,” that he could without injury to himself participate in them, that the law of the land permitted them, and he claimed his right to join in them; that those who thought them wrong, were free to abstain from them, but not thinking so, he should engage in them whenever he chose,—what would be thought of the religion of such a preacher by most classes of professing Christians? And yet wherein does it differ from what takes place respecting slavery? I have shown, I think, to

the satisfaction of the candid and unprejudiced, that slavery is as much opposed to the law of love—the rule of doing as we would be done by, as the amusements referred to are to the command to be separate from the world, to conform not to it, &c. That the tendency of slavery is more injurious to society than amusements, appears to me sufficiently manifest from the view of it given above. Now to see preachers of the gospel and church-officers opposing the one, even to the shutting out of the church those who engage in them, while they practise the other all their lives long, and bring up their children to do so too, is to me a most glaring inconsistency.

Or take those amusements in which the love of pleasure is connected with the love of ill-gotten gains, as cock-fighting, horse-racing, card-playing, &c., over and above the tendency of these practices to produce vanity, love of the world, and all those passions which balls, dancing, &c., are charged with producing; they are charged with leading to covetousness, injustice, fraud, cruelty, and a whole train of evils. Their tendency to produce these evils is abundantly dwelt on, to prove that they are opposed to the spirit of the gospel, and are sinful in the sight of God. Now, I ask, are not the same evils chargeable on slavery, and in a much greater degree? Horse-racing and cock-fighting are cruel to those animals. Admit it. The cruelty, however, is confined almost wholly to the hour of the race and of the fight. At other times, those kept animals are usually well provided for: many a race-horse and game-cock is much better taken care of than slaves usually are.

But is there no cruelty in depriving fellow creatures of rights dear as life, and that for no crime? Is there no cruelty in keeping them from generation to generation in a state of absolute subjection, in making them drudge all their lives long, and their children after them, and that without any compensation but a bare subsistence?

Is there no cruelty in treating them as property, and sacrificing the most intimate relations, the strongest endearments of life, as pleasure, interest, passion, or caprice, may dictate? Is there no cruelty in so shutting them up in slavery as to leave no door of escape, no chance to rise

in society, no opportunity of bettering the condition of those who are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh? Is there no cruelty in all this? and the half is not told. What then is cruelty? Are all our sensibilities to be stirred up at the sufferings of a game-cock during his hour in the pit, or the race-horse on the turf; and no notice to be taken of the wrongs and oppressions of our kind, although prolonged from generation to generation? and this from the professed followers of the compassionate Saviour, of him who would not break the bruised reed, who came to proclaim deliverance to captives, the opening of prisons to those who are bound. "Tell it not in Gath, and publish it not in the streets of Askelon," lest the enemies of our religion have indeed cause of triumph.

But horse-racing, card-playing, &c. lead, it is said, to covetousness, injustice, fraud, and a whole train of similar evils. I readily admit it, and join in condemning them as injurious to morals and religion; and I would ask, is not slavery productive of the same evil passions and practices, and that in a much greater degree? The gambler, instead of following some honest business for a livelihood, covets and seeks the property of his neighbour, and in a way that gives no equivalent for value received. Very well. The evil is great. But how is it with the slave-holder; does he render a just return to the slave for what he takes from him? He takes more than property, more than the product of his labour, he takes liberty—the right of seeking his own happiness, enjoying the fruit of his labour, and providing for himself and children. And is there no coveting and taking what of right belongs to another in all this?

But it will perhaps be said, the gambler uses unfair means to get the property of his neighbour. Admit it. He cheats his neighbour out of it.

Now I wish to know how much worse it is to cheat a man out of the fruit of his labour, than to take it from him by force? Is the slave voluntary in giving up the fruit of his labour? None will pretend that he is. It is a case of galling necessity. Resistance would only add to his sufferings.

The gambler may be able to say in palliation of his



practice, that he meets his neighbour on fair ground. Each agrees to put so much at stake. His neighbour has as good a chance to win as he has. If he does cheat his neighbour, his neighbour would, if he could, cheat him. There is no force or violence in the matter; he obliges none to play and lose.

Can the slave-holder say as much in palliation of holding slaves, and taking from them the fruit of their labour? Has the slave any choice in the matter?—any chance to win the game? None at all. He is retained in slavery, as his forefathers were reduced to it, by force. He is obliged to work and toil all his life long for another, and the fruit of his labour is exacted by the strong arm of power. Is there nothing of injustice in all this? Is there nothing of coveting and taking what of right belongs to another? And yet many will apply the threatenings of God's word against the workers of iniquity, to the cock-fighter, horse-racer, card-player, and the frequenter of other amusements; while they hold their fellow creatures forcibly in bondage, take from them the fruit of their labour, and expose them to all the vice and evils incident to a state of slavery? Who can help thinking of those whom our Saviour rebuked for "straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel;" for "tything mint and rhue, and all manner of herbs, while they passed over the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith." Whether professors of religion who justify slavery, will see the inconsistency or not, it is seen and noted by others, and that to the no small discredit of religion. The evil already done, the evil now doing by such departures from the spirit and purity of the gospel, by such evading of the plain, practical rules of Scripture, is incalculable.

It has done much to lower the standard of morals; it has done much to obscure the glory, and impede the benign influence of the gospel; and the evil is not likely to be removed by a zeal against fashionable amusements, by tything mint and rhue and anise, while justice and mercy are so manifestly neglected.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

IN the present letter I shall notice briefly some arguments used to justify or excuse the practice of slavery.

Some attempt to justify it, or at least to prove that religion must have nothing to do with it, from the meaning of Δουλος (doulos) the word mostly used in the New Testament to express those in domestic relations. They assert that it means slave, and infer, that as that condition is mentioned, and directions given respecting its duties, and no fault found with it, that therefore religion does not condemn it. The argument contains false facts and bad reasoning.

Archbishop Potter, in his Greek Antiquities, gives the following statement as to the meaning of Δουλος, (doulos): "The inhabitants of Attica were of three sorts, 1. Πολεται, (poletai) or free men; 2. Μετοικοι (metoikoi) or strangers; 3. Δουλοι, or servants. Of servants there were two sorts. The first were of those that through poverty were forced to serve for wages, being otherwise free-born citizens. Slaves, as long as they were under the government of a master, were called Οικεται, (oiketai), but after their freedom was granted them, they were Δουλοι, (douloi), not being like the former, part of the master's estate, but obliged to some grateful acknowledgments and small services, such as were required of the Μετοικοι, (metoikoi)." Page 39—50.

Pool, in his Synopsis on 1 Peter i. 18, gives substantially the same statement.

According to this authority, and it is of the highest kind, Δουλος, which is the word mostly used, is a general term, embracing all sorts of persons in domestic relation, slaves where there are any, but also hirelings, bound servants, &c. But when used as a particular term, it means not slave, but freedman, who, both among the Greeks and Romans, sustained to his former master the relation of client.

Δουλος, then, includes slave only as one condition of a general relation, and does not justify that condition. The case is the same as that of other words expressing a general relation. The words king, prince, &c. express the general relation of ruler; and under that embrace the

unlawful condition of tyrant, despot, usurper, &c. ; but it does not follow that tyranny, despotism, usurpation, are therefore lawful.

So the word signifying marriage, embraces the conditions of that relation found in polygamy and concubinage ; but it does not follow that because Scripture calls all these marriage, and enjoins the proper duties of the relation, that therefore these are lawful.

ΟΙΚΕΤΗΣ, (oiketēs), we are told is the particular word for slave. The apostles, however, seldom use it, but almost uniformly use the word *doulos*, which embraces all in domestic relations.

The case is nearly the same with עֶבֶד, (obed), the corresponding word in Hebrew. It is a general term, and expresses all kinds of persons under authority. It includes slave as one condition of servitude, but it does not justify that condition. Both these words are often used to express subjects under their rulers, tributaries and others under authority ; and especially are they used to express God's people. Servants of God, servants of Christ, servants of righteousness, &c. It would sound oddly to say, slave of God, slave of Christ, slave of righteousness, &c.

It is said again that slavery is a relation of society, that the Gospel is not designed to interfere with man's relations to man, but to induce him to perform the duties that result from his relations. This argument, as mostly used, includes some truth, some error, and more bad reasoning.

With respect to man's natural and lawful relations, it is readily admitted that religion finds no fault with them, and simply goes to enforce the duties thence arising. But the case is otherwise with relations that are unlawful and immoral. The adulterer and adulteress sustain a relation to each other which religion forbids under pain of exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. Some civil governments, however, allow it. The polygamist sustains an immoral relation to some of his wives—the tyrant sustains a relation to those under him that is sinful in him.

The relation of master and servant, when formed with the consent and for mutual benefit, is natural and lawful ; but this is not the case with slavery. Slavery is a thing of force and violence. It is not with the consent of the slave, nor for the benefit of the slave.

Now to say that a relation founded in force and continued by force, where all is exacted from the one party, and for the benefit of the other, must not be found fault with, because it is a relation of society, is so manifest an absurdity, that I marvel any should for a moment credit it.

I know that some dislike to hear slavery spoken of as a thing of force and violence. But what is the fact? Is the slave voluntary in his slavery? The question is not, does he prefer being the slave of one more than of another? but whether he would not much rather be free than the slave of any man? Not whether he is well fed and clothed, and not oppressed with labour; but whether he would not much rather feed and clothe himself, and enjoy the fruit of his labour? And as to slavery being a forced thing, if a slave will not work, are not means used to make him? If he rebels, is not more force used, even to calling in the civil authority and taking his life, if he will not submit? And if a slave runs away, is he not hunted up, and chastised, and compelled to return to his labour? Why are slaves considered as the natural enemies of their masters, and kept disarmed and under the watch of a vigilant patrol? Everything proves that the relation is one of force.

Nearly related to the above, is the statement that slavery is a political thing, an affair of state, an arrangement of civil society, and the inference from this, that therefore religion must have nothing to do with it.

And does it never happen that an arrangement of civil society is sinful? Polygamy, and divorce, and infanticide, at pleasure, are allowed under some governments; are they therefore not wrong? The abstract principle will, I apprehend, be decided correctly by most persons. If civil society should permit its members to do what is admitted to be wrong, as to blaspheme God, commit murder, violate the seventh commandment, would that permission justify us in the sight of God in acting thus? All, I think, will agree that it would not. Now we are assured that the law of God extends to our whole conduct to our fellow men, and is summed up in the command to "love them as ourselves, and do to them in all things as we would have them do to us." That this is inconsistent with holding them

forcibly in bondage, and compelling them to serve without wages, has been proved. The law of the land, however, permits men to do this. Now here is a disagreement, in fact, between what the law of God and the law of the land permits. To call it a political thing, an affair of state, &c. does not alter the nature of the thing. The case is just this. The laws of society permit men to do what the law of God forbids. Now if God is to be obeyed rather than man, the case is decided, and the talk about its being a political thing is nothing but a sophism.

It ought to be recollected, that many governments as absolutely forbid slavery as they do stealing or murder. Others, however, permit slavery. But none require their people to be slave-holders. Some, wishing to prevent an increase of free coloured persons in the state, require those that are liberated to leave the state; but none forbid persons freeing their slaves, if they send them out of the state. Now to say that slavery is a political thing, because thus permitted, and that religion must not touch it, is placing the matter on a singular footing. Why not also make horse-racing, balls, dancing, lotteries, the theatre, &c. political things? While many states not only forbid slavery, but make it highly criminal to practise it; no state, that I know of, makes it criminal to have balls, dances, or to attend the theatre, &c. Now if religion must have nothing to do with slavery, in those states that permit it, much less ought it to have anything to do with balls, dances, the theatre, &c. which are permitted in all the states; and yet among those who use this argument in defence of slavery are found many who not only insist that dancing, balls, and the theatre, &c. are wrong, but would, in fact, turn persons out of the church for frequenting them. O consistency, where art thou?

We are to obey God rather than man. Now slavery is a violation of God's law, and therefore not to be done. It is doing an injury to our fellow men, and therefore not to be done. It is but a permitted thing, and therefore we offend not against the laws of the land in refusing to practise it ourselves, and using our influence with others against it.

Some have deceived themselves, and puzzled others, by saying that the direct object of religion was to fit men for

heaven, that it operated in a sphere entirely different from that of civil society ; and, for these reasons, had nothing directly to do with worldly matters, nor with slavery as a thing of that sort.

And what was the use then, one may ask, of giving the second table of the law, containing six out of the ten commandments ? It relates to this world's matters, to the relations and duties of man to man. And what is the use of that, much the larger, part of Scripture, that unfolds the principles of the second table of the law ? They might on this plan have been dispensed with ; for they relate to things that belong to the sphere of civil society. The duties of the second table are, however, as directly enjoined as the duties of the first.

Admit that religion has in view to fit men for heaven, still it is true that it requires a regard to the duties of the second table, as well as the first, in order to our getting there. See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10 ; Gal. v. 19—21. And to love our neighbours as ourselves, is given by our Lord as the sum of its requirements.

As the terms civil society, government, &c. appear to bewilder some persons, and beget in them an opinion that with their permission things may be done without sin, which otherwise would be very wrong ; it possibly may serve to dispel those intellectual mists, were such persons to substitute for civil society, government, &c. the expression, the *will of the majority*. That will, regularly expressed, is the law of our land ; and will any one for a moment say that the *morality* of a matter is to be fixed by a majority of votes ? that our obligation to obey God's law depends on the will of the majority ?

As it has been settled in our civil constitutions, that men may be of what religion they please, or if they prefer it, be of no religion at all, it would follow, if moral duty depends on the permission of the civil law or the will of the majority, that we are now under no obligation to obey God ; for that is a matter about which the law of the land permits us to do as we please. It is left, as slavery is left, to the will of individuals.

If a man professes religion, he is protected in its exercise ; and if a man holds slaves, he is protected in so



doing. But if the professor of religion gives up his profession, and neglects all the duties of religion, he may do it without any offence to the State: And if a slave-holder abandons slavery, and restores to their natural rights those he has heretofore held in bondage, he is free to do it. The laws of Virginia do, indeed, require that such slaves should leave the State. This may be hard on them, but most of them would rather do that, than to remain with their posterity in bondage.

The fact that slavery was introduced among us, not by ourselves, but by our forefathers, is almost constantly brought forward as an excuse for our practice. Admitting that this may be some palliation, a moment's reflection might satisfy any one, that we are not justified in living in a practice in itself wrong, by the fact that our fathers acted so before us. The laws of civil society, the conduct of man with man, the history of God's dealings towards nations and individuals, as well as the express declarations of his word, are all opposed to this plea of justification. How can you read your Bibles and not see that, as a matter of fact, the sins of our fathers instead of justifying us in living in the same, will assuredly, unless we repent, be visited on us? It is laid down as a principle of God's providential government, that he will visit the sins of the fathers on the children unto the third and fourth generation. This is explained in Scripture, (*Ezek. xviii.*) as especially applicable to those cases, in which children continue in the same sins in which their fathers lived. The way and the only way to escape visitations for the sins of our fathers, is to forsake those sins, and as far as may be correct the evils they have done. Not only is this principle plainly taught in Scripture, but it is illustrated by examples, and some on the very point in question.

The generation of the Egyptians that were visited with such heavy judgments for enslaving Israel did not begin the work of enslaving that people; it was commenced long before. They found it in existence, received it from their fathers, and were probably the third or fourth generation that had practised it. They followed the footsteps of their fathers; and while, probably, making this identical excuse, the cloud of vengeance was gathering over them, which swept them as with the besom of destruction.

So it was with the Babylonians, and the nations that acted with them, in oppressing Israel, that "held them fast, and refused to let them go." God visited on them their own sins, and the sins of their fathers; gave them up to spoil and slavery, and caused it to "be recompensed unto them according to their doings."

The practice of slavery, may have been going on about as long among us as it did in Egypt; and while some are pleading in excuse that we did not begin it, they seem to forget that, according to God's word, we are the generation at which the divine threatening begins to look hard. The very fact that it has gone on so long, is in proof that the cup of iniquity must be filling up, and the bitter waters almost ready to overflow.

It is again urged, that slaves are property left us by our fathers, or purchased with our money; and that it is hard to be required to give them up. This, I suppose, touches the merits of the question. Temporal interest is opposed, or thought to be opposed, to moral duty, and many of the worst crimes committed by man flow from the same source. The gambler, the extortioner, the robber, the murderer, are mostly influenced by supposed temporal interests. If our religious principles, if our regard for God's law, if our sense of justice between man and man, all yield to a supposed worldly interest, that fact *justifies* a fear, whether we fear or not, that we are lovers of the world more than lovers of God. It proves that we possess not the faith that overcomes the world. Much as property may be desirable, he has yet to learn the first elements of Christianity, who does not know that even poverty itself is much more honourable, in the sight of God, than ill-gotten wealth.

The Egyptians could have made a similar plea respecting Israel, and probably did. They had received them as property, as labourers from their fathers. The Israelites were more numerous than the slaves are in the United States, and of course were of immense value. Moses did not offer to buy them, but in the name of God demanded their freedom, and God by his judgments not only obliged them to give their consent, but to let them have gold and silver, and raiment in compensation for their labour while

in bondage. The many cases of slavery formerly adduced; that practised by Israel, Tyre, Edom, Moab, Assyria, Babylon, &c., for which sore judgments were sent on those nations, were all of the same general character. Persons were claimed as property, either received from their fathers or bought with their money, were retained forcibly in bondage, and compelled to serve without wages. In all these cases, the slave-holder may have thought it hard to be blamed for retaining what he claimed as property. The law of God, however, did not admit his claim, and the judgments of God avenged the guilt of making and enforcing it.

The difficulty arising from the want of habits of labour, on the part of slave-holders, is, at times, made an excuse for continuing slavery. This could have been made, and probably was made by the Egyptians, Chaldeans and others, who held their slaves fast and refused to let them go. If it were a sufficient excuse, it might have availed them. After its failure in so many cases, it is not wise to rest on it.

A wrong course of conduct mostly produces habits which present difficulty in the way of reformation. The drunkard, the gambler, the debauchee, are examples. This, however, is not considered as justifying them in going on in their evil ways. It is one of those things in the economy of our nature, which ought to make us careful not to enter on a wrong course; and if, perchance, we find that we are going wrong, we ought to lose no time in getting right. It is better to meet and overcome the difficulty of revolutionizing our habits, so far as leaving off slavery may require it, than to be under the moral guilt, and be accessory to all the evils that flow from it.

Were slaves treated as hired servants, allowed a reasonable compensation, their services might for a time be retained, and that to the mutual advantage of the master and the servant.

Many excuses for continuing slavery are drawn from the ignorance and vice of slaves; and from their idle and improvident habits. This, it is admitted, presents a difficulty to a sudden and general emancipation, and may in many cases justify some delay. It cannot, however, justify perpetual slavery.

Ignorance, although an evil, is not a crime, and ought

not to be punished with the loss of liberty. And when it is recollected that the fault of being ignorant does not lie on the slave, but on those who held him in bondage, commanded his time, and gave him not the means of improvement, it is marvellous that any should bring forward such a plea. Thousands of white men are as ignorant as most slaves; this is not, however, considered a sufficient reason for reducing them to slavery. A man may be very ignorant, and yet a peaceful and useful citizen.

While it is readily admitted, that slaves are much addicted to the lower kind of vices, as idleness, dishonesty, &c.; as to the higher vices, I doubt whether they are much worse than the whites.

Dishonesty almost always accompanies slavery. Where persons are forced to labour for the benefit of others, it is almost impossible to make them feel that there is much guilt in taking and using the property of those for whom they labour—property which they themselves have made. One of the best cures for the dishonesty of slaves, is to allow them what is lawful and right; and as to the impurity and licentiousness of slaves, they are greatly owing to the system, and cannot easily be corrected until that is changed. While their marriages are not protected—while separations are so often made, by sales and transfers and removals—while so little protection is given to female purity; we may expect them to continue. Instead of the commonness of these vices being an excuse for slavery, they form one of the strongest reasons for wholly abandoning it. Slavery tends naturally to produce them.

And as to their idle and improvident habits, while they do present a serious difficulty, still we are not to forget that these habits are in great part to be ascribed to slavery. Deprive a person of the proper incentives to industry, take from him all interest in the fruit of his labour, and you will have the character that we find among slaves.

The first colonists, both at Jamestown and Plymouth, for a time laboured and shared in common; and while that system was followed, idleness and improvidence prevailed. As soon as they altered their plan, and each laboured for himself, a manifest improvement took place.\* Slaves have

\* It was computed that the settlers at James Town did not perform as much labour in a week as they might have done in a day,

not even a common interest, and may be expected to show the effect of its absence. Give them the proper inducements, let them as freemen labour for themselves, and no doubt it will have its influence to excite to industry.

Excuses for continuing them in slavery are often drawn from the prejudices of the whites against them, arising from their race and complexion. Had the Africans brought over as slaves been of the same complexion with the whites, they never would have been held with the same iron grasp, nor would they have been so deeply degraded. We have proof of this in the case of the convicts and redemptioners, formerly brought over in considerable numbers. They rapidly blended with the mass of our community, and have become lost in it.

Now from whatever cause in nature it arises, that we are white and they are black, none will pretend that there is anything moral in it. It is not more wrong in them to be black than in us to be white. "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth." He is no respecter of persons. His law, the immutable standard of right and wrong, gives no preference to a white over a black skin. As a matter of taste, we may, without sin, prefer one to the other, as we do high foreheads, straight legs, and broad shoulders; but if we permit our prejudices "to respect persons, we commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors."

Not a few excuse themselves, in continuing the practice of slavery, on the ground that others practise it. If this were a good reason, we might find in it a justification of many other things. What vice is there that no one practises? Many swear and get drunk, and violate the Sabbath: that will not justify us in so doing. The word of God gives no authority to suppose that we are justified in doing wrong, on the ground that the multitude are with us. On the other hand, it forbids us to go with the multitude to do evil, tells us to "come out from the world and be separate."

while they cultivated the Company's land and lived out of the common stock. This lasted twelve or fifteen years. A manifest change took place as soon as each laboured for himself. The case was similar at Plymouth. See Ramsey's History of United States.

Some make their willingness to put an end to slavery depend on an impossible case, the removal of all at once, everybody's agreeing to give up theirs. Little credit is due for such cold good-will to a good cause. If persons really feel the evil of slavery and wish its removal, let them give the influence of their example. God works by means. Example is a powerful means. They know not how much good their example may do.

It has been said so often, that it now, with many, passes for a fact, that slaves are better off than free coloured people. We might have supposed, that if this were really so, the slaves themselves, who have most intercourse with them, would have found it out, and ceased wishing to be free. They, however, man, woman and child, are longing for freedom. And what is more strange, those that are free, and from a personal knowledge of both conditions, ought to know which is best, not only prefer freedom for themselves, but earnestly desire it for their kindred.

That slave-holders should so generally agree that slaves are better off, and more happy and comfortable, than free coloured persons; while slaves and free coloured people, who ought to know when they are happy and comfortable, are almost universally of a different opinion, forms one of those contrarieties of sentiment, which we at times meet with among those whose interests lead different ways. If it were a fact admitted by all—yea, by the slave himself, that he was better off than the free; yet if he were not made willing by that fact to remain in slavery, we have no moral right to use force to keep him in it. It is not our duty to use violence and force to make people happy.

We do not however admit the fact, current as it may pass, that slaves are generally better off and more happy than free coloured people. Taking their whole case into view, their labour and exposure, their food and clothing, and their opportunities for seeking their own happiness, &c.; and the reverse is probably the fact. The free can consult their taste and comfort and inclination in a thousand things. Not so the slave. The master chooses for him as to food, clothing, labour, rest, &c.; and it may be, that nine times out of ten, his taste and inclination is crossed. The extent to which the comfort and happiness of the slave is thus sacrificed, may be great indeed. For no one



need be told that our happiness and comfort are not made up of one or two items—a thousand things enter into their composition ; and inclination and taste have so much to do with the whole matter, that a man may be very miserable while possessing what to others may seem amply sufficient to make him happy.

It ought however to be recollected, that were it even admitted that slaves are better off than they would be in a state of freedom, still, with that natural and inextinguishable love of freedom which is common to man, our danger from them may be the same. They desire to be free, and when they have a prospect of attaining it, we may expect them to grasp after it, and that at the expense of blood. *Their* views and feelings on the matter will govern them, and not those which may satisfy us.

In proof that our free coloured population are generally in a more suffering state than our slaves, it is asserted that they increase less, and are, in a greater proportion than our slaves, carried off by disease.

That hardship and exposure, and especially poverty and want, wear out the constitution and shorten human life, is generally admitted. (See Appendix, C.)

Now were our free coloured population more oppressed with poverty and disease, worse fed, and worse clothed, than our slaves, the census would show that fewer of them lived to old age. The difference, however, is greatly on the side of the free coloured people.

To the plea for continuing slavery, that they form the great body of labourers in the south, and could not be spared, it may be answered, were they free and employed as hired servants, they would still be there ; and, there is reason to believe, in a more efficient state.

It is said, I know, that a part of the South could not be cultivated, and many of its most valuable products could not be raised, without coloured labourers. If this be true, it rather proves that those parts ought to be given up to the blacks, and not that the blacks should be held in slavery to cultivate it for others. The fact itself, however, may well be doubted ; and, at all events, if the labour of the blacks be used, they ought to cultivate it as freemen, and receive fair wages.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER XIV.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE question what shall we do with the coloured people, if we retain them not as slaves, is so often asked when the evils of slavery are under consideration, that it might seem unfair to pass it without notice. It is, indeed, nearly connected with the other. At the same time, until people are willing to get clear of the evils of slavery, there appears little use in spending time in discussing what we shall do with those that are freed.

There are, however, slave-holders who have difficulties on this matter, and who would not long remain such, were it not for those difficulties.

I readily admit that taking things as they now are, and especially the existing prejudice against having a free coloured population among us, the question is one of considerable difficulty. In a government like ours, where the people rule, slavery can effectually be removed only by the people. Were the great body of the people willing to remove it, they have the power. The fact that it has not heretofore been done, proves that the people were not willing to have it done. The very general confession of the evil of slavery, and the oft-repeated wish that we were clear of it, is often to be understood as we understand the drunkard, when he condemns drunkenness and wishes he were delivered from the habit, while he would quarrel with the man who would hide his bottle. Almost every wrong practice is attended with evils, which at times so harass the evil-doer, as to make him feel and talk like the drunkard; while, like him, he prefers going on to the self-denial of reformation.

Such is the state of things in the South with regard to slavery, that whatever our wishes may be, I can see before us but three alternatives. Either we must free our slaves, and separate and colonize them abroad,—or free, and permit them to remain among us,—or, before long, have conflict with them, and finally have them in possession of a large portion of the South.

I well know that each of these alternatives will seem

bitter as the wormwood and the gall to many; and in proportion to their aversion to them will be their unwillingness to admit that such is our condition. This, however, does not alter the case, nor the facts that go directly to prove it. I must refer you to the facts adduced in my third letter, and the inferences drawn from them. We have above two millions of coloured people now. They increase in the South more rapidly than the whites. We have often been alarmed with those now possessed, and serious perils have been narrowly escaped. What will it be with four or eight millions, which some of us may see, and sixteen which many of our children may see? To suppose that such a state of things would not lead to conflict, is to suppose a thing so improbable that it would be unwise to calculate on it. The products about which slave-labour is employed, would not support such a mass of people. A change must of necessity take place in their relations to their owners. But the love of freedom has ever led slaves to seek it by force. All history proves this. That such a spirit is now felt among our slaves is past dispute. That it will increase with their increase and improvement, no one need doubt. Freedom or conflict, is as certain as the march of time, and no common conflict will it be; all history proves that such conflicts assume the worst forms; of all conflicts, such ought with most care and foresight to be avoided. There is much reason to fear, that unless the great body of them are freed, or some great change made in their condition, within the next thirty or forty years, they will contend, and that successfully, for their freedom. Should their first efforts fail, still confidence and peace would be destroyed. Who could live in peace among them with the knowledge that he was on a volcano that might, at any successive hour, burst and work his ruin!

In such a state of things it is the part of wisdom to yield to necessity; to let them have, without contest, what they assuredly will contend for, and sooner or later succeed in getting; and it would be well to let them have it, in a way that would make some amends for the past, and secure their good-will for the time to come.

It still remains not perfectly clear, whether we had bet-

ter connect with freeing them the plan of separating them from among us, and colonizing them to themselves, or suffer them to remain among us. There are advantages and disadvantages attending both plans, and the main point of inquiry is, which side is to be preferred?

The question is not, which is best abstractly considered; but which is preferable as a thing to be carried into effect. However much we may prefer the plan of colonizing them abroad, yet if on examining it, we find that the probabilities are strong against its success, it would be wise not wholly to depend on it, however we might make a subsidiary use of it, to draw off a part of their number.

The present feeling, as far as I can judge, is not only in favour of colonizing them, but of doing it beyond the limits of our country. The success that has attended our colony at Liberia, is well calculated to encourage the friends of that measure. The practicability of colonizing them, their ability to govern themselves, especially with some little aid from the whites, is supposed to be proved by this experiment.

This case certainly proves that something, yea that much may be done in removing and colonizing them abroad; and the more that are removed abroad as much to their advantage, as those at Liberia, the better for them as well as for us. It may, however, be doubted whether the amount done be not greatly overrated by many as to its bearings on the whole subject. In the space of twelve or fifteen years, some two or three thousand have been removed to Africa, and a colony formed which may be able to receive from five hundred to a thousand annually. The emigrants heretofore have contained a larger portion of good and efficient character, than belongs to the great mass of our slave population. Most of them had long been free, and had been accustomed to provide for themselves, and had accumulated some property. If it be practicable to remove and colonize our whole coloured population, and as yet perhaps it is, still its practicability will not continue long. It may be possible now, but if deferred some twenty or thirty years, it must be impracticable. We have above two millions now, and at the rate of increase for the last ten years, we will in 1840, (only seven years hence) have

near three millions; in 1850, (only seventeen years hence,) about four millions. It will be no easy matter to export and colonize four millions with their increase! I doubt whether our colony at Liberia up to 1840, will have removed twenty thousand; and we will then have three millions, and an annual increase of near one hundred thousand. Should it in the next ten years remove at the average rate of ten thousand annually, that would not be more than about one-tenth of their annual increase.

Were the States most interested to take up the subject without delay, and receive aid from the general Government, much might be done; but a few more years of hesitancy and opposition will make the matter unmanageable in that way.

The history of the colony at Liberia does not prove that we could, without their ruin, throw from twenty to fifty thousand slaves on the coast of Africa in the year, even if the means of subsistence could be afforded them. I fear the reverse is proved. In addition to the advantages of the first colonists already noticed, they were favoured with the aid of Mr. Ashman, who exhibited first-rate talents for laying the foundation of a colony. That climate, however, is so fatal to whites, that it might be difficult to procure the requisite aid for so great a mass of emigrants.

It deserves the serious consideration of the friends of African colonization, whether they could not procure territory on the northern coast of Africa. There are, it is known, many and large districts, within what is usually called the Barbary States, that are almost wholly unoccupied. Portions of these might most probably be obtained. The climate is fine, the country fruitful and well adapted to the various purposes of life.

Such a situation would be peculiarly suited to our coloured population from the more northern and upland districts of our country, who suffer most from the climate at Liberia.

Emigration to the West Indies might be added to it, especially from the more southern States. The voyage would be shorter, the hazard from climate less, and the necessary assistance from white persons might be had at less cost.

Territory might possibly be procured in various quarters. I have, however, my fears, that enough will not be done by colonizing abroad, to prevent or even retard much, the progress of the evil at home. The more that is done the better ; provided, the amount done be fairly estimated as to the extent to which it will lessen our danger at home. And here I fear an incidental evil may result from our colonizing abroad. It will not, I hope, balance the good ; but, I fear, deduct from it, and make it a mixed instead of a pure good, in its influence on our country.

The little that is done in removing abroad our coloured population, and it is likely to be comparatively little for years to come, will, I fear, lead many to think that no other means need be used.

The consequences will probably, be, that while the colonies abroad rise and flourish, and Africa may become regenerated and made to share the blessings of the gospel and civilization, we, at home, will pass through times of revolution, as assuredly, and almost as soon as if not one coloured person had left our shores. It will take a large channel to keep down and effectually draw off the swelling flood of slavery.

Many who are in favour of colonizing them abroad, will, I know, object to colonizing them on any portion of our own country. And yet I apprehend, that if we adhere to the plan of separating and colonizing them, this is not only the most easy, but the only plan that has a reasonable prospect of success.

The mouth of the Columbia has been named as a suitable location for a colony. They might pass in steamboats to a point high on the Missouri, and there pass across on foot : And it may be said in favour of forming a colony of blacks there, that a civilized people will no doubt soon occupy it ; and its relative situation and distance, makes it almost certain, that it must soon be independent of us. We might as well have a colony of blacks there, as a nation of any other people. They would form a weaker nation than we are ; and if we consult our own interest, we might as well have them as a stronger nation there, with whom we will sooner or later have to settle our interfering claims. Still, the distance to the mouth of the Columbia is so



great, and so heavy would be the expense, that there is much reason to fear, they could not be removed there with that rapidity that the state of the case requires.

If the plan of separating them from among us, and colonizing them by themselves be adhered to, we must, I apprehend, if we would not fail in our object, select a place nearer those States in which the great body of our coloured population is found.

Were a south-western territory designated as a country for coloured people, where they should enjoy all the rights of freemen; and were the slave-holding States to encourage manumission, on condition of sending them to said territory; were such laws passed as are common in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, enabling slaves to buy themselves, and laws giving freedom to those born after a certain time; were means used to give them a common education, &c., the great body of our coloured population could, in the next twenty or thirty years, be removed from among us, located to themselves, and be in the way of becoming a respectable and flourishing people.

The place which they now occupy would be gradually filled up by a class of whites, who would add to our strength, industry, and improvement, and a cause of alarm would be removed from among us. The slave-holding States would really be the gainers by the exchange.

The facilities for removing our coloured population to a south-western region are much in favour of it. From Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the states farther south, they could be removed to the Arkansas or the Texas with ease and expedition. The multitudes removed annually from Maryland and Virginia to the Mississippi and Louisiana, proves how easily our whole coloured population could be located in the south-west. The relation of a south-western territory to the grain-growing states of the west, would enable the emigrants to procure with ease, and at no great expense, supplies while they were needed. The situation and health of the country would enable slave-holders, on freeing their slaves, to send some one to see them located, and at times to remain with them and direct them until they were a little accustomed to manage for themselves. They could receive from the

whites aid in the various respects in which it was needful, at much less expense of means or life than within the tropics and on a foreign shore ; and they could be removed with a hundred-fold the rapidity that they can to Liberia.

They might be so located to the south-west as to place them between us and Mexico, and be as much separated from us as they could be in any part of the United States. They would more easily mix with the Indian and Mexican races than with us. Many of them would probably emigrate into the Mexican states, and thus diminish their relative proportion among us. There is no part of our country that in so many respects is favourable for locating them in. The climate suits them better than it suits the whites, and their emigration is naturally that way.

I know that a host of objections will be started against giving them a south-western territory. From some I do not expect to gain even a patient hearing on the subject. Permit me here to say, that however common it may be for nations and individuals to deal hardly with others when they have the power—to take all the advantage they can of peculiar states of things, and to seek their own at the expense of others,—that it is wholly wrong. We should deal with others as we would have them deal with us. This is what is right ; and in the long run it will be for the best to all who act thus.

The forefathers of our slaves were brought to this country sorely against their wills : they were brought by force. They and their children have thus far been detained by force, and in a state of slavery. The evils of slavery are now beginning to be seen and felt. The question of freeing them is, however, connected with the question, What shall we do with them when freed ? The practicability of removing the great body of them to their own country is doubtful. Let us assign them a portion of the large land that we possess. There is amply enough for all. They are as much natives of it as we are, and have been as long in it. This will make them some amends for past injuries. That we ought to do. It will be setting an example of national justice and generosity, which is more honourable to a nation than all the glory

ever gathered on the field of battle. It will be doing good, and that is the only sure way of receiving good in return.

But leaving this view of the case as one for which we fear we shall find few advocates, let us notice an objection or two to assigning them a south-western district.

Let it be borne in mind, that the question of disposing of our coloured population, when freed, presents but a choice of difficulties. There is no place that is free from them. Were we to admit, which I readily do, that, abstractly considered, it would not be best to have a settlement of blacks in the south-west; yet, if I can show that the probabilities are so great as almost to amount to a certainty—that if the plan of colonizing them be adhered to, and some district in that region be not thus appropriated, greater evils will befall us than we need fear from locating them there,—then we ought in reason there to place them.

No doubt some will object, that the placing a colony of blacks in the south-west is incompatible with the continuance of slavery in the south. Admitting that this may be true, still it is not, I think, more true than that slavery will there come to an end (and perhaps nearly as soon, and in a much worse way) if no colony be there located. Let nothing be done, or only that little that is like to be effected through colonizing abroad,—and the day is not distant when the slaves of the south will go out free!

It would be practicable to begin a colony in the south-west, on such a plan, and connect with it such a policy in the slave-holding states, as would from its commencement lessen instead of adding to the danger from insurrection. Let laws be passed in the several states, giving to slaves the right of buying themselves and families at a reasonable price; laws giving liberty to slaves born after a fixed time, and to those under a certain age, after serving such a number of years. Let manumission be allowed and encouraged, and a provision made for removing to the colony those thus freed; and a door for getting free would be opened through which so many of the active and enterprising would go out, as to make it morally certain that no serious insurrection would take place. And should a few elope to the colony, that would be a small evil compared with the general benefit of the plan. And a mode

might be adopted in the colony, that would secure to the owner at least a portion of the value of such fugitives. Fugitives are usually the most worthless part of the slave-population: the state and often the owners would be better off without them. We have seen England paying for fugitive slaves. It would be better for the state to pay a minimum price for such slaves as it was made appear had fled to the colony, than let their apprehended loss be in the way of such a plan. It might be as easy getting fugitives back from the colony as from a foreign state; and we will have foreign states on that quarter. What now becomes of the slaves that escape to Canada, or Texas, or Mexico? Mostly, if not always, lost as to their owners.

As to the danger of war with them, it would not be greater than our danger of war with the Mexicans or any other border states; and if we must have contest, better have it with them west of the Mississippi, and removed from its mouth, than on both sides of it, and all along our sea-board. I ask those who talk of danger from placing them in the south-west, to look at the situation of the sea-board, from the Potomac to the river Sabine, estimate the proportion of the blacks and whites, their comparative increase, their healthiness in that climate, the facilities which their situation on the coast gives them for receiving aid from abroad; think also of the state of the world, and the feeling abroad in favour of liberty, and judge whether there be not more danger as they now are, than would result from a colony separated from us, and from the coast. I do not pretend there would be no danger, but I do contend that it would be less than what naturally arises from their location among us, and their accumulation on the sea-board. Were it a question about allowing a colony of blacks from abroad to settle in the south-west, the case would be wholly different. The question is simply as to the best disposition we can make of the blacks already in our country. Had we better allow them to remain along our sea-board, in our most valuable districts, at the mouths of all our navigable rivers, until they gain such an ascendancy as to insure their freedom and the possession of said district, with the prospect of their cutting off the whites in the whole south and western states, from their natural outlet for trade, ex-

cept at the pleasure of the blacks and perhaps a tribute for the privilege ; or while the power is with us, and before the sceptre passes from our hand, make a merit of necessity, *do with as good a grace as we can, what we must do, or before long do worse*, place the young Hercules where we will have better vantage ground in any contest which may hereafter arise with him.

A south-western district may be disposed of by the national government, and on the same principle that one is assigned to the Indians, one may be assigned to the blacks.

All the states south of the Potomac and west of the Alleghanies are deeply interested in this matter. They are in danger of being cut off from the sea-board, and losing their natural outlet to trade.\*

When Louisiana was in other hands, Kentucky and other western states felt the evil so much as to be strongly tempted, it was said, to break off from the Union, rather than not enjoy the benefit of trading down the Mississippi. There is a power growing up along that river, and over the whole country about its mouth, and the mouth of all the other rivers in the south, which, if not removed, will, to a moral certainty, before long, pull down our flag, and put another in its place.

It would add to our safety to have some small states interposed between us and Mexico. It is a sound principle of national policy for a large state to surround itself by small ones, or at least prevent any of its border states from accumulating too much power.

France has little to fear from Germany, or Austria, or Italy. They will seldom act together against her. But were they all united, there might be danger.

We will, unless some independent state be erected, have a long line of contact with Mexico, whose territory, when filled, will give her great power ; and she touches us at the very points where we are weakest, from our slave population. It would clearly be a wise policy for us to

\* Virginia, east of the mountains, has about 457,000 blacks and only about 375,000 whites. South Carolina has 259,000 whites and 315,000 blacks. Louisiana, 105,000 whites and 109,000 blacks, giving the blacks a majority of 144,000 in those three states. They are most numerous near the coast.

interpose a middle power between us and them, and the same reasons which should induce us to do it, should induce them to wish it done.

The other alternative is freeing and allowing them to remain among us.

In favour of this, it may be said that they are now among us, that they form the great body of labourers and household servants in the south, that the habits of the whites require their aid, while the habits of the coloured people are formed to the situation in which they are, that many parts of the south are unhealthy for white labourers, and that great difficulties would attend supplying the place of the blacks with a white labouring class. Strong prejudices, however, exist against freeing and allowing them to remain among us.

It ought always to be borne in mind, in all discussions of this matter, that we have but a choice of difficulties. There is no way that is free from difficulties. We must compare the evils of having them among us as slaves, with the difficulty of removing them, and colonizing them abroad; or with the evils of freeing and allowing them to remain among us. This last, for a few moments, claims our notice.

That some races of men are of a more active and enterprising turn than others, is readily admitted; and I doubt not but that the English, and perhaps most of the European races, are more so than the negro race. It has, however, been too readily admitted, that our coloured population would, if free, and allowed to remain, be idle and vicious to a ruinous degree. It cannot fairly be inferred from their idle habits as slaves, nor is it sufficiently proved from the habits of those that are free. The history of slavery among all nations and at all times, proves that slavery is unfavourable to industrious and provident habits. A state of insecurity for property is unfriendly to industry, as is proved by the state of things in Turkish countries. We have seen, that to labour in common, and live from the common stock, results in idleness. There may be cases of small communities, where the religious principle does, in a degree, supply the place of personal interest; but the union of both these principles would operate more effectually than either alone. Slaves have not even a com-



mon interest; and it is unfair to infer what they would do, when free, from what they do as slaves. To justify their remaining among us, it is not indispensable that they be as industrious as the whites; but so much so as to provide for themselves, and not prove a burden to others.

Nor do I think that a just estimate can be formed from the free coloured people now among us. It will, I think, be admitted, by those who examine the matter, that our free coloured population have laboured under peculiar discouragements. In almost all respects, the slave law applies to them.

While they are nominally free, they enjoy few of the privileges of freemen. They have almost universally been looked on with jealousy by slave-holders. They have seldom been employed where slave-labour could be procured, and almost no attempts have been made to raise and improve their characters.

But this is not all. The prejudices against them have led persons very generally to cherish suspicion, and give a ready ear to every report or surmise against them. They have been made the scape-goats for a thousand things which were really done by others. That they should be somewhat given to those vices common to poor people, and people of whom others will think evil, we might expect; but that they are, to the extent many appear to think, is not authorized by facts. Out of a free population in Virginia of above 40,000, the convictions during the four years preceding 1827, were not annually above eleven or twelve. See the Governor's message, Dec. 1827.

The fact that from one-fourth to one-half more free coloured people than slaves live over forty-five years, carries with it evidence, that they do not suffer as much from poverty and vice as has been supposed. It proves that a state of freedom among us, with all its disadvantages, is not so unfavourable to long life as a state of slavery. Those who plead the poverty and vice of the free coloured people, as a reason why they should be removed from among us, a fortiore, ought to plead for the freedom and removal of the slave.\*

\* There were, in the states and territories south of Pennsylvania in 1820, 85,813 free coloured persons under twenty-six years of

We are able to adduce a number of cases, in which Africans have passed from a state of slavery to one of freedom, and been placed in circumstances in some degree favourable to industry and improvement.

At the close of the revolutionary war, the English had in their possession above 2,000 coloured people, who had escaped to them from their masters. They were liberated and settled on lands in Nova Scotia. They led a harmless life, and gained the character of a peaceable and industrious people. They erected places of worship, and had ministers of their own. The climate however being too cold for them, near 1,400 of them removed to Sierra Leone, where they and their descendants are now, most of them independent, and some of them wealthy.

At the close of the last war, there were several hundred slaves who had joined the British. They were taken to 'Trinidad, emancipated and settled. It was objected by the planters at 'Trinidad, that they were sure those slaves would not work, but be a pest. The trial, however, was made, and they have proved, by their good conduct, that those fears were groundless.\* In both these cases, the slaves went from among us—many of them from lower Virginia. They had the same habits and general character with our present slaves.

The thousands which the British have rescued from slave-ships, and settled at Sierra Leone and its vicinity, may be adduced. They are peaceful and industrious.

I adduce, also, Nottingham's negroes, in the island of Tortola. They have been free for above forty years, and are of quiet and industrious habits.

age; 22,385 were above forty-five years of age. Of slaves, there were under twenty-six 1,076,802, and only 141,145 above forty-five; whereas a fourth proportional would be 280,892—showing a deficit 139,047.

The census of 1830 gives slaves 2,010,436—of these 1,386 are above 100 years of age. Of free coloured persons 319,467, and of these there are 627 above 100 years old. This is greatly in favour of the free. They are longer lived.

\* See in the New York Observer, Jan. 23, 1830, a recent account of them, which states their condition after fourteen years residence there, and says, that not one of them had been a burden to the whites.

The liberated negroes of Colombia, and other South American republics, may be mentioned. They are not that pest that many apprehend, but of a similar character with their white fellow citizens.

It is in place here to mention, that there are large numbers of free people of colour in most of the West India islands. Most of these were manumitted. Many of them have become wealthy. Almost all the coffee plantations in Jamaica are said to belong to them.

The Honourable Joshua Steel, of Barbadoes, abolished arbitrary punishment, substituted rewards in its place, treated his negroes (300 in number) as hirelings, and after a number of years trial, found that his clear gains were above three-fold what they had previously been. He could procure three-fold more work from them, and their health and comfort and increase was improved in the same proportion.\* Our own colony at Liberia may also be referred to. They are doing well, as we have most ample proof.

The policy of the Spaniards and Portuguese is to encourage manumission, and give to their free coloured people most of the rights and privileges which they themselves enjoy; they have not experienced those evils which it is asserted will follow from allowing them to remain among us.

The plan of liberating and allowing them to remain among us, ought, if adopted, to be accompanied with some efficient measures for improving and elevating their character.

Were all obstructions to emancipation removed; were all under ten years, to be free at twenty-five, and all born after this to be free at twenty-one; were it required that all receive a common education, and this be enforced by giving freedom at nineteen to those that then could not read; were their marriages and family relations protected, and the shameful traffic in them wholly prohibited; were they

\* I know it is asserted by some, that this case proved a failure—that the estate became insolvent. The fact of the case I believe was, that Steel's plan was abandoned soon after his death. But while Steel pursued the plan above stated, we have his own written declaration, that it was much more profitable than it had previously been.

allowed to buy themselves and relatives at a minimum price, and secured the right of a change of masters, when it appeared that they were badly used, and a similar change for the purpose of bringing husband and wife, parent and child together; were they allowed one working-day weekly, and encouraged to use it for purchasing themselves, and procuring something to begin with; and were means used to give instruction to a sufficient number to serve as religious teachers and school-masters for the rest, a very great change might, in the course of the next twenty years, be effected in the character and condition of that people.

The danger from insurrections would be almost, if not wholly, removed. The door to freedom would be open before them; the road to it so plain and short, that a shorter full of danger would not be thought of. The prospect of freedom and of bettering their condition would excite to industry and good conduct; a spirit of improvement would be awakened among them. The whites would not only be safer, but have the services of better domestics, and more efficient labourers. Good conduct might be enforced by the penalty of exportation to the idle and to vagrants that could not show how they obtained their living. They might also be taxed for the support of their own poor.

Yours, &c.

**LETTER XV.**

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

IT may admit of a doubt, which of the above measures is the best. It is, however, particularly to be noticed, that they are so far from being incompatible with each other, that all may be used as so many channels to draw off the swelling flood of slavery, which threatens to overflow the fairest part of our fair Republic. As the Bible, Tract, Sabbath-school, Missionary and Education Societies, are the lovely sisters of the same blessed family; all engaged in the same good work, although in different departments; so colonizing at home and abroad, together with a plan for changing their condition from that of slaves to that of free labourers, would give mutual aid in getting clear of the evils of our slave system. To carry into full effect any of the above measures, the aid of Government is needful. Our Government, however, is a government of the people. Each citizen possesses some share of power in making laws and directing national and state measures. He not only has the right of choice as to his civil rulers, but has secured to himself the free use of speech and the press.

The whole system of slavery is but a permitted thing. Neither the natural nor moral right of it, nor its expediency, has been decided by Government. It is not made the duty of a citizen to be a slave-holder. A prejudice against having free coloured persons among them, has led most slave-holding States to throw obstructions in the way of manumission. This, however, is a measure of doubtful expediency. It has operated to retain many in slavery, and thus increased the evil and augmented the danger. There are several things which slave-holders can do, that will tell on the general cause.

They can take the proper course with their own slaves, and they can reach the whole system, through their civil rulers, whom they from time to time elect.

They can take a proper course with their own slaves. They can free those who give evidence that they are capable of managing and providing for themselves, and those dependent on them. It is not needful that they should

make out as well as the whites generally do, to justify freeing them; but that we have reason to believe they will not prove a burden to others. Many white men provide badly for themselves. The evil falls mainly on themselves. We are justified in withholding their natural and unalienable rights from others only for justifiable reasons. Their not making as good a use of their freedom as they might, and as others do, is not such a reason.

Those who evidently are not prepared for freedom, who would almost certainly not provide for themselves the necessities of life, might, and perhaps ought to be, detained until some change takes place in their habits. This would be the case with the young, the very old, and perhaps a good many in middle life.

With respect to the old, those who enjoyed their labour while their labour was valuable ought of right to support them in old age. There would, however, be many cases in which the children would willingly undertake the care and maintenance of their aged parents.

And with respect to those between infancy and old age, instruction, and putting them on a course of managing for themselves would, in most cases, in a few years, prepare them for providing for themselves the necessities of life. Managing for ourselves is plainly one of those things that depends much on practice. The theory is useful to practice, but cannot supply its place. One of the chief causes of the debasing effects of slavery is, that the slave is almost made a machine of, is directed in everything, provided for, and controlled in everything, and thus habits of economizing and providing for himself are not formed.

With respect to young slaves, in most cases their parents, when freed, could take them with them. They are the natural guardians of their offspring, and where it can be avoided, parents ought not to be separated from their children.

In other cases, however, and in all cases, so long as they remain with their present masters, care ought to be taken to give them that instruction, and form them to those moral, and religious, and industrious habits, which would fit them for acting well for themselves. Proper training in youth so uniformly fits persons for providing and manag-



ing for themselves, that the law usually terminates their minority at eighteen and twenty-one years. There is no reason to doubt, but that proper training would fit slaves for freedom at the same age. They probably would not as uniformly as the whites succeed well; but they would succeed so well as to prevent them from being a burden to others; and of course so well as to entitle them to their natural right of freedom. This instruction both to young and old is what the word of God makes it our duty to impart to all under our authority.

The relation of master and slave I have shown to be, the unlawful condition of the general relation of master and servant. The fault, however, in this condition, is wholly in the master. In place of procuring voluntary servants, and giving them a fair compensation for their labour, he procures slaves and exacts their labour without wages. His retaining them by force in that condition, does not, however, free him from the obligation God has laid on him, to instruct those under his authority, and thus fit them for the duties of accountable beings. They are under his control, and to God he must account for the use he makes of said control. In fact, the authority which the master claims over the slave, which enables him to prevent others from instructing them, lays on the master a double weight of obligation to secure to them that training which may fit them for their duties both to God, themselves, and their fellow men. Fearful is the account which many slave-holders, and among them not a few professors of religion, will have to render on this matter. There is a soul murder as well as a murder of the body. The man who would starve his slave to death would be considered a monster. Many, however, use no means to give their slaves the bread of life; do not teach them to read the word of God; take no pains to have it read to them; and teach them nothing about God, and Christ, and salvation. They are not backward to use their authority to procure their labour; but as to the whole matter of teaching and enforcing moral and religious duty, restraining them from vice, and leading them to virtue and religion, except so far as it may effect the temporal interests of the master, little or nothing is done. Life and limb excepted, no govern-

ment on earth claims a more absolute power over its subjects, than slave-holders do over their slaves. If the claims of religion, the interests of the soul, and the moral duties of life, are all neglected; while this authority regards only the interests of the master, there must be sin, and that of no common kind.

God declared of Abraham that he knew him, that he would command his children and household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; and assigns this as a reason why the blessing promised would surely come upon him. So faithfully had Abraham acted towards his household, as regards religious training, that the whole of them received circumcision, and became members of the church.

The Mosaic Law allowed the Jews to keep no servant who did not profess the true religion, and become a member of the church. All were to observe the Passover, sanctify the Sabbath, and appear before God at the Tabernacle three times in the year. In short, their servants were placed on the same footing with themselves, with respect to the duties and privileges of religion.

The instruction of slaves claims the special attention of all who wish to remove the evils of slavery. A chief difficulty in the way of colonizing at home or abroad arises from the ignorant and improvident habits of slaves. Instruction and training is the way to remove this hinderance. A chief objection to having them as freedmen among us arises from the same source; and even the evils likely to arise from a contest with them, should that fearful event take place, would be lessened by elevating and softening their character. If we must have conflict, and that at home, better have it with persons civilized and softened by religion and morals, than with ignorant, rude, and barbarous people.

The question of sending slaves away as soon as freed, or retaining them as hirelings for a time, could be arranged as the parties thought best. In many cases it might be for the advantage of master and slave, to treat the slave as an hireling, until he had earned something, improved his habits of managing for himself, and gained information respecting his prospects abroad, and until the master had

new-modelled his domestic affairs and changed his family habits. This plan has been successfully followed in various cases.

Care, however, ought to be taken to prevent slaves from passing into other hands, who might withhold from them their freedom. The case is one in which, as soon as possible, it ought to be put out of hazard. No man can tell what may take place in future, and many have been greatly disappointed in the character and conduct of their own children. Liberty is the natural right of the slave, and the laws of God fully and fairly recognize that right. No man then in whom that right may, by the civil regulations of society, be invested, ought to withhold it, after it may safely be restored to the slave. No personal or family consideration will justify so doing. We are not to do evil that good may come.

A similar regard ought to be paid to the family relations of the slave. The natural relations of husband and wife, parent and child, &c., are fully recognized in the word of God, and their corresponding duties enjoined. No claim of property will justify us in the sight of God in forcing the slave to disregard those relations, or neglect the duties thence arising. This is often most grievously overlooked, and that by professors of religion, in the sales and transfers and devises of slaves, in which they are parties. This ought most conscientiously to be avoided: no gain ought to induce us to do it.

I know not whether, in the present state of things, a better course could be taken to promote the cause of freedom, than for slave-holders to change their plan of treating their slaves; substitute reasonable wages for force, as the inducements to labour. A plan of this kind would counteract some of the worst effects of slavery, and tend to change the whole system from that of slave to free labour, and at the same time, give the means and the preparation for emigration, if that was finally thought best.

That some difficulty would be met with at first, we must expect. The evil habits resulting from slavery would no doubt show themselves. But patience and perseverance would gradually control them. And this we are bound to do, not only from the general duty of doing

good to all men, but from the duty to make reparation to those whom we or our forefathers may have injured. The benefit of slavery has been ours; the evils and sufferings have been the slave's. His evil habits are a grievous part of his evils. We of right owe him all the reparation we can give, all the help we can afford to correct his evil habits.

But persons may act with efficiency in the capacity of citizens. The people are the sovereign. They choose their law-makers and rulers, and have reserved to themselves the freedom of speech and of the press.

It is the undoubted right of those who believe slavery wrong, and the laws and policy of the state inexpedient and unwise, to use their influence to procure the requisite change. Let them exert their influence to enlighten and give a proper direction to the public mind. They owe it to themselves, to the public, to human nature, as well as to the best interests of the slave. We know that opinions govern the world. There are many errors of a practical kind which long govern the multitude, after they have been exploded by the great mass of intelligent men. One reason of this is, those intelligent men allow themselves to practise with the multitude, their correct opinions to the contrary notwithstanding. Their correct opinions, therefore, go for nothing, because contradicted by their practice. This is most lamentably the case with respect to slavery. Few intelligent men among us justify it; and yet the great body of them practise it. How are the unthinking multitude to find out that it is wrong, while not only the intelligent, but the moral and religious continue the practice?

We insist, therefore, that we all owe to the cause of freedom, not only a correct opinion, but a consistent practice.

Were professors of religion and friends of freedom—all who wish to remove the evil of slavery, to come out and act consistently and steadily, the good effects of it would soon be seen and felt. Had the church, at the commencement of African slavery in this country, taken the proper course, it would in all probability have put a stop to it. Had the friends of religion and morals united with the friends of emancipation, at the close of the revolutionary

war, and abandoned slavery, the system would before now have gone down. And were the friends of religion and morals and personal freedom now to abandon slavery, and keep up before the public eye its moral and political evils, the system could not stand long before them. A practical standard of morals and religion would be held up, which would condemn slavery. Slavery would soon come to be viewed as we now view polygamy, concubinage, the slave-trade, and massacre of prisoners. Most persons have some sense of religion, and wish to get to heaven. Slavery would soon come to be viewed as incompatible with getting there; and one modification after another would take place, until it passed away.

This ought to be accompanied with a steady and persevering effort to so change the laws of the state as to put an end to the whole system. Until a considerable change is made in the laws, great difficulties will lie in the way of accomplishing many things that at once ought to be done. The shameful traffic in them ought at once to be stopped; their marriages and family relations ought to be protected; and all obstructions to educating them ought to be removed. Many lament these evils, and blame the state for permitting them, who appear to forget that a part of the law-making power is in their hands. They have never used their influence with their representatives so to change the laws as to remove the evils. They of course stand chargeable with a part of the guilt. Our public men will do what they know the people wish to have done. If they refuse, the people can fill their place with others who will carry into effect their will.

The Scriptures are full of proof that wicked rulers—those who tolerate injustice and oppression, or sanction it by law, bring the judgments of God upon the people. But in our government where the people make the laws, and execute them by men chosen for this purpose, the guilt of unjust laws and oppressions under them lies mainly on the people. If they abuse the power of self-government, they may expect to be punished for it; and may possibly have that power taken from them. The friends of religion and pure morals and personal freedom owe it to God, to their country, to the rights of men, and to themselves, to



use their whole influence to correct the evils of the slave-system. If they allow their influence to be on the wrong side, or permit it to lie idle, and thus enable men who have no regard for right, who perhaps have their gains from slavery, to have the rule, and perpetuate these evils, —they will not, they cannot escape a participation in the guilt. Our power in our government is a talent put into our hands to be used for good; if we bury it, we will in vain expect to escape the doom of the unprofitable servant. Among all the causes which are promoted by a union of their friends, I know of few that have stronger claims on us, as citizens, than the removing of slavery from the south. The Colonization Society has embodied many. Their efforts, however, are directed abroad, and will, I fear, fail to save the south, unless other measures, not embraced in their plan, be set in operation and steadily carried forward.

The fact that all the great interests of the south will really be promoted by the measure, ought to have a controlling weight with us. Some, I know, have doubts on this matter; and this ties up their hands from those efforts they might otherwise make. It is, however, a position which so many things go to prove, that few, if any, whose minds are not biassed, refuse their assent. We have already made several allusions to this matter, and can adduce but a few points at present.

That free labour is really more profitable to a community, few will doubt who have made themselves acquainted with the state of things in slave-holding and non-slave-holding communities. The whole state of the country, from the roads along which they travel to the houses in which they live, give proof of it. The one exhibits a neatness, care and comfort, an industry, economy and good management; while the other presents the marks of a careless, improvident and unskilful hand—a country worn out and roads almost impassable; and it requires but little attention to the nature of the case to be satisfied as to the cause of this difference.

Where slavery exists, it will make the kind of labour performed by slaves discreditable with their masters—the disgrace of the slave will, less or more, be attached to his



work; and few will be found willing to do it. Idle habits are more natural to us than habits of industry. The consequence always is, that in a slave-holding state a much smaller proportion of the whole population labour than do in a free state. But all must eat and wear.

Take a household of twenty persons in a non-slave-holding community, and most of them, perhaps all, are efficient labourers in their several departments. But take one of the same size in a slave-holding community, and perhaps one half of them are white persons, who are above doing negroes' work, who in fact add but little to the productive labour done. The result must be very different in the clear gains of those families.

But there is a great difference in another respect. Free men work for themselves, and are under the full influence of personal interest in all their labours, cares and savings. It reaches all that is done. Not so the slave, on whom the labour, in the other case, devolves. He does not labour and manage for himself. Whether he does little or much, is careful or careless, does not affect him any farther than it may expose him to chastisement or the reverse. Nothing but a constant miracle could prevent such a state of things producing results widely different. It is generally admitted that slaves do less work than freemen. As to the comparative amount, there is much diversity of opinion; and no doubt much will depend on the circumstances of the case. While some suppose that on an average, three slaves do as much as two freemen; others suppose that they do not more than from one-half to one-third as much, taking into account the way it is done.

To this we must add, that almost universally, the slave must be directed, and watched, or he will do nothing. The pay of the overseer, who is usually a man who follows it for a living and must be supported, is another heavy tax, to be deducted from the profits of the slave's labour.

We may add, as another item, the wear and tear of tools, stock, &c. over and above what would take place in the hands of those interested; for the same feelings which make the slave idle make him careless of what is put into his hands to work with or manage.

The food and clothing of the slave are usually of an in-

ferior kind; but I doubt whether there be as much saving here as many suppose. The freeman will take care of all that is left—the slave will waste what he gets. What is lost through waste will often balance what is saved in quality. Nor ought we to forget that slaves almost universally will pilfer from their masters; and, to avoid detection, they often destroy what they cannot at once use. The expense from this cause, with that incurred to prevent it, in locks and fastenings, &c. amount to a pretty heavy item.

The fact that slaves receive no wages may, by some, be thought to balance the account, if not turn the scale in favour of slavery. The evidence, however, I apprehend, is against it. Suppose a slave performs two-thirds of the work that a free labourer would do. To have the same amount of work done, three slaves must be maintained to do what two freemen would do. There is the original cost of said slaves—they must be kept and fed and clothed constantly, their taxes paid, their doctor's bills, &c. Free labourers are employed only when needed, then dismissed. There are usually a part of the slaves, in children, females, and aged ones, &c., often from one-half to two-thirds, that add little, if any, to the productive labour that is performed. They must all, however, be supported. When the whole is cast up, the balance must turn in favour of free labour.

But slavery is almost sure to lead, not only to idle habits in the owners, but to expensive modes of living. Not being employed in labour, the owners will go much abroad—mix more in company—engage more in amusements—not to say vices. This will lead to expense in clothing, equipage and attendants. Those who visit much, must receive visits. Table expenses must be increased. Amusements and pleasures are always expensive, and when entered on, it is hard to find a stopping place. It is an old saying, that “the devil finds employment for idle people.” From innocent amusements, they pass to those less innocent. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” They often end in vice of a ruinous character, from which habits of industry would have saved them.

I noticed, in a former letter, some of the moral evils produced by slavery. I will not here repeat them, but simply

remark, that the shameful licentiousness that prevails in the south is mainly to be ascribed to the slave system. And it will be no easy matter to correct it, while that system continues. Were there no other reason, every one that believes the Bible—every one that values purity—ought to exert themselves to put it down.

Slavery operates against improvements in the arts, and that in many ways. Slave-labour never can compete with free labour, as to neatness and skill. The more fine and valuable and costly manufactories cannot exist, and be carried on with slaves. Of course, they must be imported and paid for in raw materials, or manufactures of a coarser kind. The balance of profit must be against slave-holders.

It is equally unfavourable to intellectual and moral improvement among the people at large. Those institutions, on which the moral and intellectual improvement of a people mainly depend, require for their support, a certain denseness of population. It is thus with schools and churches. To keep up a good system of instruction in a neighbourhood, there ought to be within reach such a number of children, as would form a school constantly. This would lighten the expense, and enable each parent to send his child at such times as he could most easily be spared. When, however, a large part of the population are slaves, who are not sent to school, the residue often are not sufficient to form a school. The extent to which the middle and lower classes are suffering from this cause, in many parts of the slave-holding states, is distressing. Nor is it easy to find a remedy.

The same evil lies in the way of maintaining the Gospel. An intelligent ministry is a most important means, not only of moral and religious, but intellectual improvement. No other perhaps is more efficient. A man may, during the common service of the Sabbath, impart to a thousand people, a mass of well digested information, which will not only effect their hearts, but keep their thoughts and consciences at work for the ensuing week. But the man that would thus operate on the moral and intellectual character of a people, must give himself to the work, must make it his profession, and must live by it. But where a large part of the population are slaves, a part

of whose owners care but little about religion, it is often impracticable to support such a ministry. Either none is enjoyed, or so seldom, and of such a kind, as affords but little moral and less intellectual improvement. Look at Virginia, look at the slave-holding states generally, and see the proof of this fact.

Yours, &c.

## LETTER XVI.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

MANY of those considerations, which go to show the necessity of acting with promptness on this matter, have already been noticed. It may, however, be of use to refer again to this point; and especially to some topics which deserve the serious and prayerful attention of all who receive God's word, and believe in a righteous and retributive providence.

It is declared of God, "with the merciful, thou wilt show thyself merciful; with the upright man, thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward, thou wilt show thyself froward: for thou wilt save the afflicted people, but wilt bring down high looks."

"If thou forbear to deliver those that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain. If thou sayest, Behold, I knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it; and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall he not render to every man according to his work?"

"These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years—and when seventy years are accomplished, I will punish that nation for their iniquity. Many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them, and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the work of their hands."

"Reward her as she hath rewarded you, and double to her double, according to all her works. In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double." *Psal. xviii. Prov. xxiv. Jer. xxv. Rev. xviii.*

These, with a multitude of other passages, teach the doctrine of *recompenses*.

They assure us, that God, in his dealings with individuals and nations, will recompense them according to their works. Not only is this doctrine plainly taught, but the Scriptures are full of examples.

The Egyptians oppressed Israel, held them fast and re-

fused to let them go. But the judgments of God fell more and more heavily on them, until they were constrained to send them out free, after Egypt was almost ruined by the delay.

They had attempted to prevent the increase of Israel, by destroying their children; and God destroyed all the first-born of Egypt, both man and beast.

They compelled Israel to labour without wages, under task-masters; and God, by his judgments, compelled them to give to Israel gold, silver and raiment, until Egypt was spoiled and Israel rewarded.

These things happened for examples, and were written for our instruction. And we are to notice that the generation of the Egyptians that drank this bitter cup, was not the one that began the system of oppression. They however continued it, and received this visitation for their own sins, and the sins of their fathers. They might have escaped by letting Israel go out free, but this they refused to do and were dealt with accordingly.

The kingdom of Judah was destroyed, the city and temple burnt, many of the people slain, and the rest taken captive and reduced to slavery, expressly for the crime of enslaving others, (*Jer. 34.*) Other sins no doubt were punished by these judgments, but this was the sin that was especially pointed out as the leading one.

Buying and selling persons is *specified* as a sin that was visited on the kingdom of Israel, when it was destroyed. God *swear he would not forget it.* They were delivered to their enemies and sold for bond-men.

The kingdoms of Tyre and Edom, Ammon and Moab, Gaza, Assyria and Babylon, are all charged with this sin, and judgments were sent on them for it, and they were *re-compensed* by being, in their turn, dealt with in the same way.

Adonijah, when his thumbs and great toes were cut off, confessed that he had served seventy kings in the same way; and, although a heathen, owned the retributive justice of God in it: "*As I have done, so God requited me.*" "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai,"—he was recompensed according to his device against the Jews.



Profane history is full of examples illustrative of the same principle, and not a few respecting slavery.

Tyre was a great slave-trader and slave-holder—she traded in the persons of men; and Tyre perished in a night, by her slaves. But one master is said to have escaped, and he owed his life to the affection of a slave, to whom he had been more than usually kind.

The states of Greece were sorely injured by their slaves; and Lacedemon, who had distinguished herself by her cruelty, received a punishment deep and shameful in proportion. They saw the slaves in power, and indulging their lusts on the wives and daughters of their former masters.

The Romans were repeatedly brought to the verge of ruin by their slaves; and one series of insurrections in Sicily was not closed until near a million of lives were lost. That was but one of the many bloody scenes through which slavery led her.

The Sarmatians were expelled their country by their slaves. The fate of the whites of St. Domingo is generally known.

History is full of insurrections and rebellions against despotic rulers; and there is no kind of government more absolute and despotic than that over slaves. The most despotic political power leaves more liberty to the subject than is possessed by the slave. Where is the government that allows the subject to hold no property, that does not recognize the marriage and parental relation, that carries on a trade in its people, as well as compels them to perpetual service without wages? Bad as political slavery is, it is not so bad as personal—much as people may desire political, much more do they, and with good reason, desire personal freedom. And as rebellion against political power, and civil wars growing out of them, are a hundred-fold worse than foreign wars; so insurrections for personal liberty always have, and always will, assume still more frightful forms. This all history proves.

With such declarations of God's hatred of oppression, and his purpose to punish it; and with so many examples of it in the history of the world, what have we to expect at the hand of a God of recompense?

God, in his gracious providence, gave our fathers, who settled in this western world, both to know their rights and to enjoy them. Most of the settlements in America, were made between 1620 and 1680, the *very period* in which the great contest about freedom and personal rights took place in England, and before the face of Europe. The question was pretty well understood; and our fathers appreciated their rights. Yet very soon they introduced the system of negro slavery, the most hopeless and oppressive that was ever laid on human nature.

And during the contest for our *independence*, we declared that *liberty was an unalienable right*—we invoked the God of truth, and equity, and justice, to aid us in defending it. Preachers justified contending for it, and supplicated aid from on high. The professor of religion took part in the contest, and mingled in the field of battle; and when God gave success, and made us free, what did we do for the slave? He did not take sides against us; but aided us in cultivating our fields and supporting our families. Did we give him that freedom which we declared before heaven and earth was the *unalienable right* of all men? No; we riveted his chains more fast; we shut him out more and more from instruction; we added more to his disabilities, and threw more obstructions in the way of his attaining to freedom.

There has but seldom, in the history of the world, been a wider departure, by a nation, from their own avowed principles, or a more glaring deviation from the rule of doing as they would be done by. What will be our doom, if we have measured to us as we have measured to our slaves, if we are recompensed according to our works? This, without repentance and amendment, is what both Scripture and history lead us to expect.

Thus far, it is true, we have not seen the day of righteous retribution. We have, however, in the injured morals of our people, and in the declining prosperity of the slaveholding states, no dubious tokens of God's displeasure; and a man must be ignorant, or inattentive, or infatuated, not to see the natural means of retribution so gathering in the south, that, instead of a miracle being needful to pun-

ish us, nothing but a miracle can prevent it, unless we change our course.

The whole country, from the Potomac to the Sabine, and from the mountains to the sea-board, has a population of blacks more numerous than the whites. In large districts near the coast, on the best lands, at the mouth of all our rivers, and about our harbours, they are already much the most numerous. The state of the south is now full of danger; and every year increases the physical and moral power of the blacks much faster than that of the whites. A military establishment will soon be needful to protect the south, and that must be increased from time to time, with the increasing danger. It can hardly be supposed, that the non-slave-holding states will agree to bear the expense of a standing army to protect slave-holders against their slaves and to hold said slaves in bondage, and if the whole expense lies on the south it must, added to the great disadvantages of slave-labour, exceedingly oppress the south. But were that evil got over, there are others. In a government like this, standing armies are dangerous, and with the existing jealousies between the north and south, which may be expected to last while slavery does, it is not to be supposed that the north would be satisfied to see a growing military force in the south, and devoted to the south.

Such a state of things, would in all probability, lead to convulsions. The North and the South would separate. Military despotism would arise in the South, and the rapid increase of the coloured population, would soon make it needful to conciliate them. Amidst the revolutions that would follow, the slaves would most likely be called in by some party, or taking advantage of those troubled scenes, they would triumph over the whites. The whole state of things, looks so much that way, that I know not how any can help foreseeing that such times are to pass over the South, unless a new course be taken with that people.

And should the slaves fail in their first efforts, as probably they would, who can think, without horror, of the scenes that would attend the attempt. The situation in which they now are, makes it a forfeiture of life, to try

forcibly to get free ; and all other ways are closed against them. All men, however, love freedom, and every age and nation have furnished men who would risk even life itself, for freedom, when there was a prospect of obtaining it. And much more is this the case, in *this age of freedom*. The situation in which slaves are placed, leaves them only the bitter alternative of remaining with their children after them in slavery, or of forcibly seeking freedom by the destruction of their masters. It is your neck or mine. If they fail, they die ; and this naturally leads to the darkest and most deadly measures. The history of insurrections prove this.

Were they to succeed in destroying or driving off their owners, and taking possession of some considerable district in the South, who can think without pain of the scenes that would most probably follow. The attempts to subdue them ; the retaliation, &c. It would be no common contest, and He alone who knows all things, can tell where it would end.

In our revolutionary contest with England, there were many of our fathers who would have done or suffered almost any thing to prevent it. Some of them were born in England, many of them had friends and relations there. They loved England, and had the control of the matter been in their hands, they would have borne all that England might have imposed rather than contend. But when the contest came, much as they regretted it, they took sides with their own country, and fought against England and all their dear friends that were there.

When the contest takes place between the masters and the slaves in the South, it will, I doubt not, be found that thousands of slaves who love their masters as individuals, and would do almost anything for them, will still join their own people and fight for freedom. There is no other door open before them, through which the hope of freedom can come. Oh, it is cruel, it is dreadfully cruel to shut up a fellow creature to so dire an alternative.

It is farther to be recollected, that the state of things in the West Indies, Mexico and South America, generally, wears a threatening aspect towards slavery. Haiti is a

growing power, within a few days sail of our southern coast. It has now a standing army of some size. Although free above thirty years, we have not recognized their independence, while we have that of all the South American States, although much younger. This deportment towards them may be expected to beget resentment. They see millions of their own race filling up our Southern country, and retained in slavery, while we boast of our free institutions. The slaves in most of the South American States have been freed, or are approaching that condition. We may calculate, that any serious attempt at freedom in the South, will be planned with an eye to help from abroad. Were three or four divisions of Haitians, of twenty or thirty thousand each, with several hundred thousand stand of arms, to land in the South, and proclaim liberty to the slaves and give them arms and leaders, what would be the condition of the South ?

It ought also to be recollected, that while the chief Governments of Europe have a prejudice against us for our republican institutions which are undermining the throne, and displacing the sceptre ; and while they are jealous of our rising greatness, they themselves are becoming more and more the advocates of personal liberty. Slavery is expelled from most of their dominions, and efforts making to put an end to it in their colonies. Were we to get into a contest with our slaves, we have reason to fear they would not long stand neutral, and even in our own country, should such a rising of the blacks take place, that the South could not put it down, I much doubt whether the North would aid in doing it. The North is strongly opposed to slavery, and has proposed various plans for having it removed. These have not been kindly met by the South. That some would be for aiding the South, I doubt not ; but that the great mass of the people would, I much doubt. If they did interpose, it more probably would be as mediators. At all events, it is not wise to let a state of things go on, that will before long make assistance necessary, when there is no certainty that it will be received. The state of things between the North and South, has more than once been such, as to make the friends of our



country feel anxious about the permanency of our Union. Should a separation take place, and a contest follow, what would be the condition of the South? With the feeling of the North respecting slavery, and the mass of slaves in the South, we might look for the system to go down in blood.

These causes of apprehensions, are increased by the character of our slave population. It is always worse to fall into the hands of a half-civilized and immoral, than of a refined people. In our contest with England, cruel usage and abuse of females, were little feared and seldom experienced. The case at Hampden, was condemned by the English themselves. The nation and army both felt mortified at it. But what might we not expect from the slave population in the South? We have purposely kept them ignorant, and thrown obstructions in the way of their improvement. Nothing has been done to give them a sense of character; nothing to purify and elevate their feelings; nothing to give them a well grounded moral and religious sentiment. They have been subjected to harsh and debasing treatment, placed under the rule of the lowest, most unfeeling, and basest part of the whites. The marriage and family relations have been wholly unprotected—have been disregarded at pleasure. They have seen their females almost universally subjected to pollution, and believe that in a multitude of instances, violence or other unfair means have been used by the whites to accomplish it. What are we to expect from a people thus treated, should they gain the ascendancy? What would be the condition of white females that might come under their power? Look at the judgments of God, denounced on people for the abuse of females. A punishment in kind, is repeatedly threatened. With a character for purity themselves, equal to that of any other people, the white females of the slave-holding States, have not exerted their influence as they ought and as they might, to protect the purity of the blacks. Such is the influence of the female part of our community, that had it been fully and fairly directed to protect the marriages and general purity of the blacks, we need not doubt but that to a great degree it would have done it. It is painful to think of the retribution that awaits them, growing in



part out of their own omission of duty, should the slaves gain an ascendancy in the South.

Some entertain the hope, that Virginia may be able to get clear of her slaves, or at least by sending them to the South and West, so keep their number down as to be in little danger from them. This opinion may operate to prevent those efficient measures that ought to be taken to remove the evil. Suppose that by becoming more and more a negro-trader, she may remove them to the South and West, the consequence will be, that she will thus prepare a more speedy and inevitable ruin for the South; and many of her own children will be involved in the ruin. Thousands of them are in the South, and every year adds to their number. She may suffer as deep a shame and punishment in the persons of her sons and daughters in the South, as she could at home. And when the South shall have passed into the hands of the blacks, how will it be with her at home? There has for forty years past been in proportion as great an emigration of blacks to the South and West, as we need expect for the future; while their increase at home has been greater than that of the whites. Not only have they become more numerous, but more intelligent, and better qualified to take advantage of any emergency that may arise; and from the day that a successful insurrection takes place in any part of the South, our whole sea-board, from the Potomac to the Sabine, will be in perpetual jeopardy.

If the South has not wisdom enough to prevent more blacks from coming there, Virginia ought to have compassion enough not to send any more, unless she is willing to see them in possession of it. The safety of the South lies, in so managing matters, as to prevent any part of it from passing by violence into the hands of the blacks. When that takes place, it will be like the breaking forth of waters, none can tell how far they may flow.

The great reliance which many place on prudence and caution, as the way to escape the evil, while nothing is done to arrest its approach, is a painful matter. Admitting all the efficacy these can have, they are wholly inadequate to give security. No prudence or caution will prevent the

increase of their physical or moral power. Within less than a common lifetime from this, they will, from their number, if nothing be done, be in possession of the South.

But there is no wisdom nor council against the Most High. It is his declaration, that he will visit for sin. The whole history of his dealings towards man, proves, that when his time for retribution is come, he will find means to execute it; and not unfrequently he uses means prepared by those whom he would chastise. Pharaoh spared and educated Moses in his palace, trained him in all the learning of Egypt, and thus qualified him to be the avenger of his people, to spoil Egypt, and make Israel free.

Cesar spared Brutus, and gave him that access to his person, and those other advantages, that enabled him to be the avenger of his country, by the death of the tyrant.

Charles the First obliged Cromwell to land and remain in England, when on the point to sail for and settle in America. He was detained in England to avenge an injured people, chastise a corrupt and fawning nobility, and take the head from an oppressive and tyrannical king.

If those times do pass over the South, that we have so much reason to fear, the event will probably show, that in the families of some of those who have been the great supporters of the slave system, and most devoted to its gains, and opposed to all attempts to do it away, will have been raised and prepared the avengers of their people. Such masters have often favourite slaves, sometimes mulattoes, who enjoy great advantages for gaining information, and who possess enlarged views of the state of their own people and of the world. God often takes the wise in their own craftiness, and makes their folly, as well as their wrath, to praise him.

The importance of beginning in time is admitted on most subjects. Many, however, I fear, are not aware of the pressing nature of this matter. Every unprejudiced mind, I should think, must, on looking at the whole subject, admit, that it has been put off too long. It is one of those things that must be placed in a different position, or the most fatal consequences will ensue.

While the number of slaves was small, their doubling

did not make so striking a difference. But we have now above two millions, and a few more doublings will give us a number wholly unmanageable.

Those who possess absolute authority over others, can seldom be induced, in the greatest emergency to resign it. Not unfrequently, every disinterested person can see, that give up or ruin is the only alternative; while those in power are so blinded or infatuated, as confidently to think they can weather the storm. How many rulers have been hurled from their seats to ruin, who, if they could have been induced to consult moderation, might long have possessed all the power it was good for them to possess. How many by grasping too much have lost all; and how many have looked back with long and bitter regrets, at their folly, in not being more reasonable in their claims, and more regardful of the rights of others.

The British government was admonished again and again not to hold her colonies with too hard a grasp, not to force them to be her enemies, and advised to make it their interest to be her friends. She laughed at the idea of our resisting, and, glorying in her strength, was confident that she could put us down at once. How many bitter regrets has it cost her! and what a rival has she raised up in her path. In 1840, we will have a coloured population equal to our whole population when we entered into that contest with the mother country. We had then half a million of slaves among us, who might be considered as deducting an equal number from our strength, leaving us an effective white population at that time not equal to our present number of blacks. And I venture to say, that the great body of disinterested persons thought our prospect of success not better, than similar persons would think a well arranged insurrection of blacks in the South. And surely none among us can be more confident of our ability to put down an insurrection, than England was of her ability to crush our attempt to go out free and independent states. England, however, was sorely disappointed. A train of events, ordered by an overruling Providence, took place, which she could not control; and as the result, we went out free. It would be wise in us

to take warning. How bitterly are those statesmen condemned who led England into those unwise measures, and how will the names of our leading men stand with posterity, if they provide not against the evil before us?

We justly, and almost universally, blame our fathers for introducing negro-slavery among us; and what will our children say of us, if we let the evil go on until the blacks take possession of the South; seize on all our sea-board; occupy the mouths of all our southern rivers; cut off our trade from abroad; force our children into the mountains; and oblige them either to give up all foreign trade, or pay them a tribute for being allowed to pass out to the ocean? I know the indignation which the bare mention of such a thing will produce. It will not, I admit, take place with the consent of the whites. But what can a man do when another has become too strong for him? Many a man, and many a people, have submitted to things sorely against their will. England was as reluctant to let us go out free, and thus lose the fairest jewel in her crown, as we would be to let the blacks have the South. But what could she do? Contend eternally? We had become too strong for her. She only hurt herself. It is one of those cases in which, if we let things go on, in their present course, the time is not distant when the consequences cannot be controlled; and if the temper which has thus far prevailed in the South be allowed to rule a few years longer, the matter will be incurable, except by violent remedies; and the names of those who have been in power, and have used that power to prevent better measures, will be classed with those who brought the Africans to our land. The one for gain brought them in violation of all right, and the other for gain and want of wisdom have, although warned again and again, refused to adopt the only measures that promised to arrest and avert the impending evil.

Yours, &c.



## APPENDIX.

## A.

THERE are many things in negro slavery, as it exists among us, to which we all would think it exceedingly hard and unjust, to be ourselves and families subjected. Now the law of “doing as we would be done by,”—the law of “loving our neighbour as ourselves,” appears to me most manifestly to forbid that we should subject others to these things.

The negro slave may, with a solitary exception, be said to be stript of all his rights. The law recognizes his right to life, and makes some provisions to secure it from being violently taken away; but even those provisions are far short of what are deemed necessary to secure the life of the white man. How this difference is viewed in the eyes of him who “made of one blood all nations of men,” and declares “himself no respecter of persons,” deserves the serious consideration of all; and especially of those who call God their Father, and profess to take his word for the rule of their conduct.

With the above exception, I hardly know the right, natural, civil, or religious, which the slave can be said to possess. All are claimed by the master; and the law of the land sustains his claim. The slave is reduced to a mere chattel—is held by his master as property, with absolute and uncontrolled authority to use him and treat him as his interest, or passion, or caprice may dictate. The slave may be bought and sold at pleasure; and that without any regard to his inclinations; without any regard to long and faithful services—and without any regard to family ties. His times of labour and of rest—the kind and degree of labour, depend on the will of his master. Should



a master refuse the degree of rest needful to support nature—should he work his slave beyond his natural strength, the slave has no redress. No one is authorized to interfere. The master claims the whole proceeds of the labour of the slave; and that without acknowledging any obligation to give any compensation, more than a bare subsistence. And as to the means of subsistence, the kind and quantity of food and clothing, the master has it absolutely in his power. Should he give what is unhealthy in kind, and insufficient in quantity, there is no redress. The master may punish his slave in what manner and degree he pleases, (not immediately taking life) for his faults, real or suspected; or for no fault at all. Should a master from prejudice, or caprice, or sheer cruelty, abuse and punish and torture his slave every day, as much as his nature would bear; I know of no law of the land which would make it the duty, or enable any one to interfere and stop the crying injustice. The master may cut off his slave, to what extent he please, from intercourse with the world. He may prevent his forming family connections; or he may break them up when formed. Where the relation of husband and wife exists in good faith between the parties, and is strengthened by all the endearments of a family of children, the pledges of their mutual love, the law still gives no protection. The master may sell the husband without the wife, or the wife without the husband; the parents without the children, or the children without the parents. He may sell them all—he may sell them all separately; one to one man, to be removed in one direction, and another to another man, to be taken in a different direction, as his interest, passion, or caprice may influence. The owner may keep his slaves as ignorant as he please, or as ignorant as he can. He may refuse to teach them to read, and may forbid any other person to do it. He may oppose their religious instruction. He may prevent their attending the preaching of the gospel. He may place them in situations so remote from the public means of grace, and so lay his commands on them as to staying at home, that, humanly speaking, the slave has no chance of hearing and understanding the gospel to his salvation. Yea

so absolute is the power of the master, and so cut off from all help and all defence is the slave, that the slave may be obliged to enter on and pursue sinful courses. Female slaves may be compelled to unclean living. The direct power of the owner or manager to enforce his wishes, by hard usage, and punishment in various forms, and the want of means of defence on the part of the slave, even as to giving testimony against a white man, places the purity of the female, and the comfort and happiness of both male and female, as connected with female purity and mutual confidence, in the power of those over them. Whether slaves be allowed to perform parental duties—educate their children, or children perform filial duties, depends on the will of the owner.

It would be easy to add to the above statement other things in which the situation of the slave is most exposed—is most hard—is such as their masters would be utterly unwilling to be held in themselves with their families—is such that masters would think it righteous in the sight of God and man, to run every hazard and contend even unto blood, rather than continue in it, and leave it a heritage of sufferings and wrongs to their children.

Now the single question I would press for an answer, given in the fear of God, is this:

Is the believer in the Bible, is the professor of the religion of Christ, justified—can he be justified in the sight of him who is no respecter of persons?—Can he be justified by that word of God, which commands him to “love his neighbour as himself?”—by that command of Christ, “In all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them,” can he, I say, be justified in holding a fellow creature deprived of rights which, in his own case, he declares unalienable; and for which he would think himself justified in the sight of heaven and earth, in contending even unto blood?—Can he be justified in giving his countenance to a system, which is based on a total disregard for rights, which he puts in the same scale with his own existence,—a system, which opens the door for evils and oppressions, against which he would think it right to defend himself and family at every hazard? Can

he be acquitted before that "God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," in giving in to a practice, pregnant with so many evils: which presents such strong temptations to iniquity, and which operates in so many ways against the salvation of both master and slave?

I think it useless here to enumerate all the ways, in which professors of religion explain the "rule of doing as we would be done by," in its application to slavery. Perhaps the more common way is to apply the rule to the case in a very partial manner; in a manner so partial, as not at all to touch its most essential parts. Thus the whole matter of depriving a fellow creature of his rights; or (which in its morality is the same) withholding them from him, is passed over.

The rule of doing as we would be done by is not applied to the act of withholding his rights; but to the treatment he receives, considered as thus stripped of them! We daily meet with persons, who appear to make the whole morality of holding slaves, consist in the manner of treating them. To the treatment of slaves simply considered, they, in some sort, apply the rule; but to the act of holding a fellow creature in slavery, considered separately from his treatment in that state, they appear not to apply the rule at all. They take it for granted that the "rule of doing as we would be done by," allows the holding of slaves, provided we treat them well.

Now this to me appears, most manifestly, a partial application of the rule to the case. The most important part of the case is not tried by the rule at all. No question is made about stripping a fellow creature of rights, or withholding them from him. And why not? Is it not one of those cases in which we can suppose ourselves in a change of place, and so apply the rule as easily, as we can to any special act of treatment towards those in slavery? On what authority is it withdrawn from the catalogue, embraced by our Saviour in the first part of his rule: "In all things, &c., do ye, &c."

It appears to me capable, if not of absolute demonstration, yet of a high degree of proof, that the single act of withholding from a fellow creature his rights, or in other

words, the holding him in slavery is the “very head and front of the offending.” This is the great original sin in every case where slavery, such as exists among us, is found. The treatment of slaves may be good or bad, kind or cruel, in all their various degrees; and may of course be more or less conformable to the “rule of doing as we would be done by.” But the act of depriving a fellow creature of his rights to the extent the negro slave is deprived of his, or the act of withholding or refusing to restore them; or, in other words, the act of holding him in slavery,—is at all times and in all situations a violation of the rule. For plainly, no man who has common sense and understands the case would be willing to be stripped of his rights, and held in slavery such as the negro is doomed to. So far from being willing to be treated thus, he would think it most hard, he would, if he understood his natural rights as most masters do, think it most unrighteous; and would think it right to make every effort to burst his bands, and go out free. Now on what principle is it that the rule “of doing as we would be done by” is not applied to this case? May the professor of religion in the face of the rule and in the hearing of the declaration of his Master, “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,”—mete out the hard measure of slavery to a fellow creature, while he would at every hazard refuse it in his own case?

I pass by for the present all the questions respecting the treatment of slaves, and the bearing it may have on their opinions on this subject. For the sake of getting that part of the question separated from the other, let us suppose that they are treated as well as they ought to be—that the law of doing as we would be done by, applied fairly to the case of their treatment, finds no fault; still he is in slavery, and what is implied in that? Why he is stripped of all his rights; is entirely under the power of another; is held as property with a long train of disabilities, and deprivations, and liabilities to evils and oppressions, in all their varieties. Now the question returns, do the laws which Christ has given his people to regulate their conduct towards their fellow men, allow of this strip-

ping another of his rights, or withholding them from him? It appears to me most manifest that they do not, and yet many appear to see the matter differently. It seems therefore necessary to attempt a farther illustration of it.

No injuries are more pernicious to us, no injustice is more cruel than that done to our rights. This surely needs no proof in the day in which we live, and among the free and enlightened people of America. Injuries of no other kind are to be compared with them. The reason is plain. While we are invested with our rights, they are our armour of defence against all kinds of evils to which we are exposed from our fellow men, and where an injury is received, our rights in their legitimate operation will procure us amends. They are an armour defensive and offensive. They afford security. But where in any case they fail to do that, they enable us to procure amends for the evil suffered.

But suppose we are injured in our just unalienable rights; suppose we are stripped of them, suppose they are forcibly withheld from us, our armour of defence is gone. We may be injured every day—we may be assailed on every part. We have no help. We have not the means of defending ourselves against the injury; we have not the means of getting amends for it.

To illustrate this case, suppose a man or a body of men deprived of the single right of self-defence, and that not for any crime, but to enable those who deprived them of the right to accomplish certain purposes with them, their families, property, &c., the fact that some of these persons might, owing to peculiar circumstances, feel but little inconvenience from the cruel measure, would not alter the character of the measure, nor lessen the guilt of those who passed it. The very nature and tendency of the measure was to expose them to oppression and injury and wrong, and that without redress. No one act of wrong that they might meet with under it, nor any number of acts would equal, in their amount of wrong, the injustice and cruelty of the single act which stripped them of the right of self-defence, and for the plain, simple reason that the act which stripped them of the right of self-defence, exposed them to

all kinds of assaults and injuries from all sorts of persons at all times and places.

Or suppose any man or body of men put out of the protection of the law, not for any crime, but simply that those who did it might treat them as they please and serve themselves of them. To what does not their outlawry expose them? They may be watched and waylaid, and ensnared—they may be hunted with men, and guns, and dogs, and all kinds of offensive weapons—they may be deceived and betrayed by acquaintances, relations and friends. No person, no place, nor time, is so sacred as to afford protection. Now it would take nothing from the monstrous injustice of the outlawry, were we to suppose that some of the outlawed, owing to peculiar circumstances, felt few, if any, of these evils, and for the obvious reason, that the act of outlawry exposed to all sorts of evils. It was its nature to do this, and if they all did not fall on the victim, no thanks to the act, nor to those who passed it. The act of outlawry is the great injury—the original sin in the case. More or less evil may flow from it, as times and other things may permit; but it produces no good of itself, but evil, only evil, and that continually.

That injuries in our rights are the greatest evils we are exposed to—are great mother-evils, which are prolific of others to an unknown extent, is well understood by the American people. This is evidenced by the fact, that both the wars which were carried on against England were for rights.

The special act of injury committed at the commencement of the revolutionary war, considered separately from the rights involved, would, we may safely say, not have produced war. The money drawn from us by the three-penny tax on tea, and the stamp act, was not worth fighting about, except as it involved principle.

But had we yielded the principle that England might tax us at pleasure, who can tell what taxes she might have laid? what burdens imposed? She might have ground us to the dust; and made us hewers of wood and drawers of water, to her wants, or pride, or extravagance.

In the last war for Sailors' Rights, the case was much



the same. The number of sailors impressed was not so great, nor their condition on board the British fleet so deplorable, (they fared as the British sailors did) as to make a resort to war indispensable, leaving out of view the rights involved. But had we given up the right of search and impressment, who can tell to what extent it might have gone? Who can tell how many thousands might have been torn from house and home and all that was dear, and made to spend their lives in fighting the battles of England?

We might refer to the political questions now agitated with so much earnestness, between the national and state governments, and their adherents. Rights are the bone of contention. And they are contended for with a zeal which proves that their worth is understood. It is seen, and felt, and avowed, that with our rights is connected everything that is dear—that if they be lost, all is lost—if they be saved, all is safe.

That our rights are more important than anything else of which we can be deprived—that we may receive a deeper injury in our rights, than in any other way, (and of course may do a greater injury to another in his rights) is on the whole, well understood by the mass of the people. They have been pretty well schooled on this matter.

Now to see a professor of religion who is thus alive to the worth of rights; thus alive to the deep and irreparable injury which he may receive from that quarter; and who professes obedience to the command of his Lord, to “Love his neighbour as himself”—“To do in all things as he would be done by,”—to see him, in applying this rule to the case of slavery, pass over the whole matter of rights, the very part where he is most alive in his own case—the very part where the deepest wound may be given—the greatest injustice committed,—and busy himself about the quantity of bread, and meat, and clothing, which will satisfy the rule—what shall we say of it! “What man seeing this, and having human feelings, does not blush, and hang his head to think himself a man.”

What were the rights we were like to lose at the commencement of the revolutionary war? and to prevent

which we entered into that fearful strife? The right of not being taxed but with our own consent. And what were the rights contended for in the last war? The rights of not being subject to search and impressment. These rights were, in the view of the people at large, worth contending for unto blood. The great bulk of professing Christians thought so too, and gave ample proof that they approved of the war, as right and necessary, by contributing their part to support it; and many of them by treading the tented field and mingling in the strife of battle.

Now, what are these rights compared with the rights of which the slave is deprived? They are a mere nothing! and how can the Christian slave-holder say, he obeys Christ, "he does as he would be done by?"

But it will, perhaps, be said, the slaves don't know their rights; they have never possessed them and can't estimate their loss! Now passing the generosity and justice of withholding from a fellow creature his rights, because he is ignorant of them, or unable to assert them, I would like to know how it is reconciled with the morality of the gospel? what part of the teaching of Christ or his apostles, gives the shadow of authority for a course of conduct of this kind? How can it be reconciled with the rule of "doing as we would be done by?"

Apply the principle to the case of property. An orphan has a right to property; but owing to some untoward circumstance in which he has been placed in infancy, and kept ever afterwards, he knows but little, if anything about his rights. The whole matter is so situated, that while his right is good, his neighbour can keep him from the possession of it, and, to a great degree, ignorant of his right to it, and destitute of the information needful to make the best use of it, were he in any way to get it in possession.

What now would we say of the honesty of that neighbour, who would take advantage in such a case? What would we say of his excuse, "he does not know the property is his;" "he does not know his rights;" "he can make no estimate of his loss." And how much would he mend the matter in the eyes of every honest man were he

to say, the person whose property I hold, not only does not know that it is his, or at least I can hold it in spite of him ; but he is too ignorant to make a good use of it, if he had it ; when it was notorious that he had kept him in ignorance, as a means of keeping him from his rights ? And were this defrauder and oppressor to plead the example of others who acted in the same way ; were he to plead that every man with a white face in his neighbourhood, treated every one with a yellow or a black face, as he did the orphan boy, how much would he help his cause ? Were he to profess the religion of the Lord Jesus, and take his seat at the sacramental table, while he still held on to the wages of unrighteousness, what would we say of his profession ? what would we say of his religion ? Suppose he were heard to say, and with great self-complacency, “ I am good to the orphan boy ; I have, it is true, stripped him of his all, but I am not cruel to him. I give him bread and meat when he passes, and at times make him presents of my old clothes.”

How would public indignation brand such conduct. How would the report of it spread from Dan to Beersheba ; and how would his name, blotted with disgrace, be handed down to posterity.

Now, what is the loss of property compared with the loss of liberty ? what is poverty compared with slavery ? and on what page of Scripture is the rule of justice, of doing as we would be done by, suspended, when we meet with a man with a black face ?

## (B)—POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES ACCORDING TO FIVE OFFICIAL ENUMERATIONS.

STATES & TERRITORIES.	1st Census Pop. 1790.	2d Census Pop. 1800.	3d Census Pop. 1810.	4th Census Pop. 1820.	5th Census Pop. 1830.	1830. Free Col.	1830. Slaves.	Pt. Cl. 10 Yrs.
Maine,	96,540	151,719	228,705	298,335	399,462	1,207		
New Hampshire,	141,885	183,858	214,460	244,161	269,533	623		
Vermont,	85,539	154,465	217,895	235,764	280,679	885		
Massachusetts,	378,787	422,845	472,040	523,287	610,014	7,006		
Rhode Island,	68,825	69,122	76,931	83,059	97,210	8,064	23	
Connecticut,	237,946	251,002	261,942	275,248	297,711	3,565	14	
New York,	340,120	586,050	959,049	1,372,812	1,913,508	45,080	46	
Pennsylvania,	434,373	602,545	810,091	1,049,313	1,347,672	18,307	2,246	
New Jersey,	184,139	211,149	245,562	277,595	320,779	37,990	386	
Delaware,	59,096	64,273	72,674	77,749	76,739	15,829	3,305	
Maryland,	319,728	345,824	380,546	407,350	446,913	52,942	102,878	
Virginia,	747,610	880,200	979,622	1,065,366	1,211,272	47,103	469,724	
North Carolina,	399,951	478,103	555,500	638,829	738,470	19,575	246,462	
South Carolina,	249,073	345,591	415,115	502,741	581,458	7,915	315,665	
Georgia,	82,548	162,686	252,433	340,989	516,567	2,483	217,407	
Alabama,		8,850	40,352	127,901	308,997	1,541	117,494	
Mississippi,				75,448	136,806	529	65,659	
Louisiana,			76,556	153,407	215,575	16,753	109,631	
Tennessee,		105,602	261,727	420,817	684,822	4,513	142,379	
Kentucky,	73,677	220,959	406,511	564,317	688,844	4,816	165,350	
Ohio,		45,365	320,760	581,434	937,679	9,586		
Indiana,		4,651	24,520	147,178	341,582	3,562		
Illinois,		215	12,282	55,211	157,575	1,653	746	
Missouri,			19,783	66,586	140,074	546	24,986	
District of Columbia,		15,093	24,023	33,039	39,858	138	4,578	
Michigan Territory,		551	4,762	8,896	31,260	253	27	
Arkansas Territory,			1,062	14,273	30,383	840	15,500	
Florida Territory,					54,729	6,163	6,060	
Total,	3,929,328	5,309,758	7,239,903	9,638,166	12,856,171	319,467	2,010,572	31.5

## COLOURED PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES.

*According to five Official Enumerations.*

Years.	Slaves.	Free Coloured.	Total.
1790,	697,697	59,511	757,208
1800,	896,849	110,072	1,006,721
1810,	1,191,364	186,446	1,377,810
1820,	1,538,061	226,775	1,764,836
1830,	2,010,629	319,467	2,330,096

(C.)

Mortality lessens in the world as civilization and improvement advances. In England,

In 1700, the deaths were as 1 in 25

1780, do do 1 in 40

1790, do do 1 in 45

1800, do do 1 in 47

1810, do do 1 in 50

In London from 1700 to 1750, deaths were as 3 to 2; from 1750 to 1800, as 5 to 4; since 1800, as 12 to 15.

In Sweden, from 1755 to 1775, deaths were 1 in 35; from 1775 to 1795, as 1 in 37.

Of 100 new born infants in 1780, there died in two years 50; at present, 38.

In 1780, died before ten years old, 55

At present, - - - 47

Lived in 1780, to 50 years, - 21

Live now to 50, - - - 32

Lived in 1780, to 60, - - 15

Live now to 60, - - - 24

A careful examination of the several wards of Paris, proved that the greater the proportion of poor in any ward, the greater the proportion of deaths.

This will appear from the following tables. Table I. gives the proportion of houses not taxed, on account of the poverty of the people. Table II. gives the proportion of deaths in each ward.

TABLE I.

1st ward,	11	houses not taxed in the	100
2d	"	7 do	do 100
3d	"	11 do	do 100
4th	"	15 do	do 100
5th	"	22 do	do 100
6th	"	21 do	do 100
7th	"	22 do	do 100
8th	"	32 do	do 100
9th	"	31 do	do 100
10th	"	23 do	do 100
11th	"	19 do	do 100
12th	"	38 do	do 100

TABLE II.

1st ward,	1	death in	58 persons
2d	"	1 do	62 "
3d	"	1 do	60 "
4th	"	1 do	58 "
5th	"	1 do	53 "
6th	"	1 do	54 "
7th	"	1 do	52 "
8th	"	1 do	43 "
9th	"	1 do	44 "
10th	"	1 do	50 "
11th	"	1 do	51 "
12th	"	1 do	43 "

Ward No. 2., has but 7 untaxed houses, which is the smallest number, and the deaths in that ward are 1 in 62, which is the smallest number of deaths.

Ward No. 12 has 38 untaxed houses, which is the largest number; and the deaths in that ward are 1 in 43, which is the greatest number of deaths. A similar result will be found generally, on an inspection of the tables.

See Berard on the influence of civilization on health and longevity.













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